

Interview with Perry W. Linder

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

PERRY W. LINDER

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Q: It's the 4th of December, 1996, and Perry, you, I see, entered the Foreign Service in 1957. Tell me how you got interested in the Foreign Service, where you grew up, and what motivated you to join the Department of State.

LINDER: I grew up in California, northern California, I graduated from San Jose State University in 1952. I entered San Jose State in 1948, that was the time that all the veterans were coming back to school. There was one fellow that I knew quite well who graduated about two years before me, and he became a diplomatic courier. I saw him from time to time, and that, I suppose, was my first knowledge of the Foreign Service. I graduated in 1952 during the Korean War, and enlisted in the Army Security Agency; they sent me to the language school at Monterey to learn Russian. And, after having learned Russian, I went to Germany. Got to Germany in 1953. There were a lot of people from Ivy League colleges in the Army Security Agency, a group of people I'd never met growing up in California. Many of them knew about the Foreign Service. Also, while I was in Germany my friend the diplomatic courier was stationed in Frankfurt, and I used to see him from time to time. So that's how my knowledge of the Foreign Service developed.

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My undergraduate degree was in Public Administration. I had not focused in any way on International Affairs as an undergraduate. I went to graduate school at Berkeley after I got out of the Army. I started there in 1955 or 56. I was an MBA candidate. I had a friend there who was also in the School of Business Administration but who was interested in Foreign Trade and International Business. He took the Foreign Service examination, and that motivated me to take it. He took it, I was in the process of looking for a job, so I took the Foreign Service exam.

Q: You would have taken that in what, 1956, probably?

LINDER: I think it must have been in 1956, right.

Q: And you passed it?

LINDER: Yes, I passed it. When I learned I passed it I was working in San Francisco. I had a job as an assistant to the advertising manager of the largest wholesale grocery firm in northern California. I was invited for an interview.

Q: And that was in San Francisco?

LINDER: That was in San Francisco. And after the interview I was offered a position as a Foreign Service officer.

Q: And I see that your entry was in May of 1957; since I also entered the Foreign Service in 1957, I know that there were a number of classes that year; I think it was one of the largest intakes ever, or at least in that period.

LINDER: Yes, I was in a large class, I'm not sure how many. There was a class directly before mine, a 1956 class, but there were a couple of classes in 1957. There had been an article in a Forbes Magazine about how the Foreign Service was looking to bring in

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more people interested in management. It was on that basis that they were particularly interested in me. I didn't have a Foreign Affairs background.

Q: So after your initial orientation training period at the Foreign Service Institute, did you go immediately abroad, or did you stay in Washington...

LINDER: No, my first assignment was here in Washington. I worked in the Office of German Affairs. At that time the Office of German Affairs was like a bureau today; it was a very large organization. I worked initially in the public affairs office, and later became a special assistant to the director, Jacques Reinstein.

Q: Of German Affairs?

LINDER: Yes, he was the head of the office of German Affairs.

Q: About how long were you in Washington in that office?

LINDER: Not very long, maybe a year and a half.

Q: And then you went to your first post?

LINDER: My first post was Hamburg, Germany, a natural follow-on to an assignment in the office of German Affairs...

Q: Had you learned some German when you were stationed in Germany in the Army?

LINDER: Not really, no.

Q: Did you have some German training before you went to Hamburg?

LINDER: At that time we had a German language school in Frankfurt, and I was assigned there. I spent three months in Frankfurt and then on to Hamburg.

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Q: And in Hamburg you did the usual kind of junior officer consular work?

LINDER: That's right, I was a consular officer, and I issued visas and refused visas, and then became the consular officer for passport and citizenship, shipping, that sort of thing.

Q: American services?

LINDER: American services, yes.

Q: Who was the Consul General, do you remember?

LINDER: His name was Ed Maney; I think it was his last post; he retired from there. He was from Texas. Quite a role model, a person who had been in the Foreign Service for a long time, and who was comfortable at what he was doing, and managed the consulate general well.

Q: This period at the end of the '50s was a time when there were a number of posts in then-West Germany, Federal Republic, and of large US presence, there were military in the Hamburg area, I think, were there?

LINDER: Hamburg was in the British zone. We had a group of military veterinarians, in the consulate. It was a large consulate—we had a large CIA presence, USIA had a big establishment there as well. We also had an office at that time in Hannover. It was a sub-office of Hamburg with two FSN's.

Q: Providing consular services?

LINDER: No, it was there for commercial reasons. Irv Shiffman was the Consul in Hannover at the time. When he went on home leave I spent three months in Hannover; that must have been 1958. I know I did a report on Volkswagen; they were in that consular district.

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Q: Did you see if they had some promise?

LINDER: At that time, they were already selling Volkswagens all over the world and doing very well.

Q: The Beetle and the Bug.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: So from Hamburg, what was your next post, Perry?

LINDER: The next post was Kingston, Jamaica. When I learned of the assignment I phoned a colleague who had served there and told him, "I'm going to Kingston, what can you tell me about it?" And he said, "Hey, get out of it if you can. It's a terrible post." And he said, "If you have to go, when you get there the first thing you should do is buy a dog and a gun. And every night before the sun sets, you go out and fire off that gun a few times so everybody knows you've got a gun." And he said, "Train your dog not to take anything from anybody, because they'll poison the dog, they'll feed him some ganja and he won't do you any good." He told me it was a terrible place fraught with crime and not a pleasant place to be.

Q: After that advice, did you try to get out of the assignment?

LINDER: No, I didn't.

Q: Did you find that both the dog and a gun were essential?

LINDER: No, not at all. I thought it a great country and great people, and I never felt uncomfortable there at all. I met my wife there, my present wife. I spent three years there; I was, again, Consular Officer, I did some visa work, but mainly citizen services. I also did some economic reporting. I was there when they set up Air Jamaica. While I was there

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Jamaica became independent; it became independent in 1962. When I arrived I served in a consulate general, and when I left it was an embassy.

Q: And the first United States ambassador arrived while you were there?

LINDER: I think his name was Bill Doherty; he had been the head of the Postal Workers Union.

Q: And that would have been an appointment by the Kennedy administration, I guess.

LINDER: That's correct. Because I was there when Kennedy was assassinated. And also, when I was there, the first group of Peace Corps volunteers arrived, mostly teachers.

Q: Yes, I think some of the English speaking countries were the first to actually receive the Peace Corps because they didn't have to have language training, Jamaica, and I know Ghana was actually the very first, I think, where they actually arrived, but there were others that were close.

LINDER: Yes in 1961, the first group. I must say they had a very nice experience. I mean, I knew the kids that were in the Peace Corps. They were a young group, mostly just out of college, and they were very well set up there. It was a very receptive place for them, and you know, they got a little bit of money, and having just come out of college, they had a good time out there, and I think they provided a good service.

Q: Was the training done in country in Jamaica, or....

LINDER: No, they had some training before they came. I think they set up a training school in Saint Lucia, one of the other Caribbean islands.

Q: Were you Consular Officer throughout your time there, or did you switch to another job?

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LINDER: No, I was Consular Officer, I was there for three years, and that was my job throughout. It was then that I decided that I would really specialize in administration.

Q: Even though you really hadn't done that yet, other than the graduate training in business administration.

LINDER: Right.

Q: This was before we had cones, so you were forced to decide.

LINDER: That's right, there were no cones at that time, but they did have the four divisions, political, economic, consular and administrative.

Q: Did you decide at that time that you would pursue a career in administration because you had seen some good role models, good administrative officers, or maybe some bad ones and thought you could do as well or better?

LINDER: Well, there was Marme a part-time administrative officer in Hamburg and I never really thought much about that at the time. In 1962, Vice President Johnson was the US representative to the Jamaican independence celebration. In any visit of that magnitude there's a big administrative to-do and that peaked my interest. When I saw what the administrative office had to do and to take care of, it interested me, and, my own background. Academically I was better prepared for administration than I was for other functions in the Foreign Service.

Q: Was there quite an expansion of the post when it moved from being a consulate general to an embassy at the time of independence, or was it pretty much the same structure, same staff?

LINDER: No, it expanded. We got Marines, we got a station, I don't even know that we had a communicator before becoming an embassy. I know we used to get all our

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communications from Cable and Wireless. We'd go down to there at night, they'd give us a call and we'd pick traffic. If we had something to transmit we'd take it down there.

Q: Did Kingston have regional responsibilities at that time, or was it only...

LINDER: Not regional responsibilities. However, the the Cayman Islands were included in its consular district. But you know, it was at that period when the hope of the US, and perhaps the British, was that all of the Caribbean islands would combine into a federation.

Q: Confederation?

LINDER: Into a confederation, right. And you know, they made a stab at that. The capitol was to go in Trinidad. However, there was a referendum, and Jamaica decided they didn't want to be part of that. So when Jamaica became independent and the embassy was established, they actually moved some of our people, who were in Trinidad in anticipation of the confederation, to Jamaica.

Q: When you actually arrived there, I guess in 1960, was it known that independence was coming, say, in 1962, or did that happen fairly abruptly? Were they ready or independence?

LINDER: Yes, it was known. I think Jamaica was ready for it. The British did a good job of leading them into it. They had well established political parties, both political parties in Jamaica had a labor union base. They had some senior statesmen who were recognized and well trained and educated.

Q: With your wife from Jamaica, you've been able to go back, I assume, a number of times over the years, and you've probably seen a lot of change.

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LINDER: Yes, I go back fairly regularly. Well, there's been change. Of course, the biggest change was when Michael Manley was elected in the '70s. He was the son of Norman Manley, Jamaica's first Prime Minister.

Q: Was he first?

LINDER: Maybe he wasn't; I don't recall...the two prominent leaders were Bustamante and Normal Manley. I know Bustamante was elected and headed the government. I believe Norman Manley was Prime Minister at the moment of independence. Anyway, his son, Michael Manley, was a socialist, certainly liberal, and he had definite ideas of how things should be. When he was elected, he brought about dramatic economic and social change, many of the middle class, established Jamaicans left, and he gave opportunity to those who hadn't had an opportunity before. That was the biggest change. At that point the establishment began to be replaced by new people, and the class structure—I don't know if it was broken, because it still exists, but at least you had an influx of new people who had never had an opportunity before in Jamaica. There was a breakdown of established structure and responsibility. The country never really recovered from Michael Manley's experiment with change. It is a bit frightening in Jamaica these days. But, when I say it hasn't changed much, it looks much the same, people still have to hustle for a living, and nothing works quite properly.

Q: When you were there, though, on assignment in the consulate and in the embassy, the British were still very important, in terms of civil service and administration.

LINDER: Yes, permanent secretaries in most ministries were senior British civil servants.

Q: When you were doing consular work, was there a lot of pressure for visas to come to the United States to immigrate, or...

LINDER: Yes. There was a lot of fraud on the visitor's visas side, and I think the immigration quotas, or whatever they were, were also fully subscribed. At that time,

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Jamaicans still had access into Great Britain, a lot of them were going there. One interesting thing while I was there, what the British call "hire purchase". You could buy a car and pay for it on the installment plan. Well, that came to Jamaica, and the Jamaicans are real hustlers, they made the most of that. They'd buy a car and then sell it and use the money to go to Canada or to go to Great Britain or the US, and the whole hire purchase thing sort of ground to a halt after about two or three years.

Q: They were taking advantage of that.

LINDER: That's right.

Q: Probably at that time, though, it was easier for Jamaicans to go to Britain, I mean to Canada, and it was later as there were restrictions, that more and more pressure came to go to the United States, is that right?

LINDER: That could be, I don't know. But, there was always pressure for visas; there was a big Jamaican population in the United States, in New York particularly; that creates its own demand.

Q: For families to come together and so on.

LINDER: Right. And you know, there was a long history of movement of Jamaicans to the US. At that time they still had the agricultural program where they would take agricultural workers to the US to work in the fields of Florida and Louisiana.

Q: The economy of Jamaica itself was still largely based on sugar?

LINDER: They had three bauxite companies in there; they were doing well at that time. The price of bauxite was good, and they were still expanding. That may well have been the biggest single source of revenue. Of course, tourism has always been a source of revenue; sugar and bananas, were in decline.

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Q: Montego Bay was up and running?

LINDER: Yes, Montego Bay was up and running, it was a popular tourist resort. When I was in Jamaica I had to go to Round Hill; Senator Javits was a frequent visitor there. It was interesting, a lot of prominent American figures would visit this north coast, both political and from the entertainment world. They would fly into Jamaica and spend their vacations there, but you'd never see them or hear of them at the embassy. It was rare that we ever got involved with these visitors.

Q: But they would go there essentially on a private basis....

LINDER: Yes, they would just fly into Montego Bay, they would never come to Kingston or inform the embassy of their presence unless there was some particular service that had to be performed for them.

Q: Was there quite a bit of American investment in bauxite and otherwise in Jamaica at that time?

LINDER: Reynolds Aluminum was there.

Q: Kaiser?

LINDER: Kaiser as well. Reynolds, Kaiser, and ALCAN were the three.

Q: Let's talk about, finally, one of Jamaica's other neighbors, Cuba. You were there during the Cuban missile crisis, I believe.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: How was that?

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LINDER: Well, it was certainly exciting. We had this fleet in the Caribbean with the Marines. It was decided that they would use Kingston harbor as a base for recreation and resupply. Tenders were anchored there, and there was constant movement of naval vessels in and out. At the time, I was responsible for shipping, and became the post's liaison with the Navy.

Q: There was no naval attach# or...

LINDER: No, we didn't have anything like that. I made the initial arrangements for docking, water, supplies, lighters, garbage. I remember I went around with the Shore Patrol; they did a survey before the ships got there. We visited all the whorehouses in town. They each showed us all around their place. It was just an interesting experience. From a political standpoint, I don't recall that it affected Jamaica much. Of course, one development was that Guantanamo Bay was blocked off from Cuba. The Navy then recruited workers in Jamaica, and would take them to Guantanamo. They would do their work and then they'd get home leave. In other words, Jamaicans replaced the Cubans in Guantanamo.

Q: And that happened as a direct result of the missile crisis in 1962?

LINDER: As I recall.

Q: Did you get involved in that recruitment effort, or did the Navy send people in to do it?

LINDER: The Navy sent people in to do it. I did go out to Guantanamo Bay at least once, to do some kind of consular work, I don't recall what it was now.

Q: That must have been a good source of foreign exchange for the Jamaicans, in addition to tourism and bauxite, and...

LINDER: I think, you know, remittances from abroad were always one of their top sources of foreign exchange.

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Q: From Jamaicans in the United States, and Britain...

LINDER: ...The United States and Canada and Britain, yes.

Q: Okay, anything else about Kingston we should talk about, Perry?

LINDER: No, I think that'll be all.

Q: Okay, what was your next Foreign Service assignment?

LINDER: I went to Tegucigalpa, Honduras. When I left Jamaica I first came to FSI for three months language training,...

Q: Spanish?

LINDER: Spanish. And then went to Honduras, where I was General Services Officer.

Q: So that's your first administrative assignment.

LINDER: That's right. I got to Honduras just after there would been a coup, the military had taken over the government. The police had been disbanded and they had the military on the street corners directing traffic. I never felt very comfortable in Tegucigalpa. I found it a very depressing country, although there were people there that liked it, but the government at the time was not one you could admire, and anybody you met there, people of influence, didn't have the interest of the country in mind. There was a large Indian population which were really pitiful people, at least as observed in Tegucigalpa. They lived in very poor circumstances. It was a depressing country. I used to have to go a couple of times by jitney to the Pacific Coast. There would be passengers with pistol belts. You really felt like it was the wild west. The Sheriffs in these little towns were men of tremendous importance and influence, overbearing importance among the Indians.

Q: There was a real sense of control of society by the...

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LINDER: Yes.

Q: Were you married at that time? Was your wife with you? No?

LINDER: No. I intended to get married, and at that time you had to submit an application...

Q: To marry a foreign national.

LINDER: That's right, you not only had to make application, you had to submit your resignation. We had gone ahead and planned our wedding in Jamaica, and like many things in Jamaica, it was a big affair with lots of people to be invited. We were actually married in December 1964, and so when I left Honduras to go to the wedding I still didn't have the approval. The embassy in Jamaica assisted me. I explained that the wedding was about to take place and the Department finally said Okay, but they took away my security clearance. I went ahead and got married, and afterward Judy and I went back to Honduras. Shortly after my security clearance was reinstated. And at that time when you married a foreign national your assignment was cut and you went back to Washington. The idea being to provide your spouse the opportunity for orientation in the US and the opportunity to become a citizen. So, we left Honduras in March '65; we drove back to the United States—it was quite a drive. Probably a couple of years after that you couldn't do it because of the problems in El Salvador and in Guatemala, but at that time, we were able to do that. We took about a month. We spent 10 days in El Salvador and then went on to Guatemala, Chichicastenango and Lake Catalan. We crossed into Mexico at Tapachula and spent a week to 10 days at Oaxaca, and then on to Mexico City.

Q: That was your honeymoon trip, sort of. So you probably weren't totally unhappy that you didn't serve a full tour in Tegucigalpa.

LINDER: I was quite happy to leave Honduras. The job, General Services Officer was interesting, but I didn't have the best guidance from a supervisor at that time.

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Q: Okay. Security, I suppose, for the embassy was not a major issue at that time? Were you also acting as Security Officer, or did somebody else do that?

LINDER: No, there was a Security Officer there. I did do consular work while I was there; I filled in when the consular officer went on home leave, or was absent.

Q: And was there opposition, you say there was a coup in the government; was there any opposition to that expressed, that it was not a civil war or a rebel group, or to the extent that people were unhappy they were sort of quietly expressed, I suppose.

LINDER: There was no civil war, but there was tension. You would hear shots in the night and disturbances but while I was there, there was no uprising or anything like that. As I recall, they did have elections either while I was there or shortly after I left, and that provided some stability. I can't even remember at this point who won the elections. I think the military group in power won the elections.

Q: Then you say you came back to Washington. What was your assignment in the Department?

LINDER: I worked in the Office of Performance Evaluation. That was a very good assignment. I learned a lot about the Foreign Service. That's where I really sort of got the hang of things in the Foreign Service, just working with the selection boards and the files and the names and the people. It was an opportunity to meet a lot of people and to really see how the Foreign Service worked. When I started that office was still run by Civil Service people. The change over from Civil Service to Foreign Service took place while I was there. The head of Performance Evaluation had always been a civil servant.

Q: And the office was concerned with the personnel evaluation of both Civil Service and Foreign Service people, or...

LINDER: Just Foreign Service.

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Q: What was your impression in those days—did you feel that the evaluation system for Foreign Service was full of holes and was broken down, or did you feel that it worked and did what it was intended to overall?

LINDER: I thought it was a good system. I thought people got a fair shake and that it worked like it was supposed to. You always had the problem with the performance evaluation, whether this rating officer had accurately described performance.

Q. How honest the people are.

LINDER: Yes, how honest the people were. While I was there, we had the confidential report, the part of the evaluation that you didn't show the rated officer. That was instituted while I was there, a bright idea, but one that was not sustainable. I think it only lasted about two years. Then it was opened to the rated officer, and they did away with it. Of course, spouses were evaluated at that time, too.

Q: How did you feel about the change to having Foreign Service person be the head of that office; did that seem to make sense, or obviously you lost something in terms of continuity, but you brought something in terms of knowledge of Foreign Service reality.

LINDER: I think it made sense to make that change. There were a lot of things in the Department at that time that were run by civil servants who had been in the job a long time, and had worked hand in hand with the Foreign Service over the years. I remember the General Services operation, I can't remember his name, a guy that had been there for years and years. He talked to every new General Services Officer going out into the field. Kind of a personal thing. The Department had a lot of situations like this. In Performance Evaluation you had a man who had been in there for many, many years. He was actually not there when I arrived, his deputy, who was also Civil Service, had taken over from him. The deputy did not have the strength of character and importance that this man

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had developed over the years. So it was ripe for change, and it made sense to make it a Foreign Service operation.

Q: Course, all of this was in part a result of the Wriston Commission Report, I think in the late 50's, that had recommended more integration of the Civil Service.

LINDER: That's right.

Q: Foreign Service and Civil Service had forced a lot of Civil Service people to take foreign assignments.

LINDER: That's right, and you know, there was a lot of talk, controversy about that in the Foreign Service from the time I came in, and whether those who had been Wristonized were treated fairly or whether they were considered as second class Foreign Service officers.

Q: It meant, of course, to people of our generation, that many of these people were our supervisors or seniors, and some of them were very unhappy to have been forced to take foreign assignments or move into jobs they really didn't feel interested in or qualified for.

LINDER: I'm sure that's true. I never had that situation; I never had a supervisor like that, but I'm sure that was true.

Q: So you were in Washington what, about three years, Perry?

LINDER: Yes, three years.

Q: And what was your next assignment?

LINDER: I was assigned to Paris, I mean, having been in Personnel and with the influence that one gains in Personnel, I had managed to set myself up for Paris. But along came BALPA, I don't remember what it stood for...

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Q: *Well, I think it...*

LINDER: It was a reduction in force.

Q: *Balance of Payments something-or-other, to reduce the cost of operating abroad.*

LINDER: So anyway, the position that I was to go to in Paris had been abolished. And because I was in French language training, they decided to send me to Dahomey, now known as Benin, as Administrative Officer. And you know, in retrospect, it was a good change. I know I learned a lot more being Administrative Officer and got more satisfaction out of it, and I think progressed faster than I would have if I'd gone as a GSO to Paris.

Q: *In a very large embassy, in Cotonou you were, what, you were Administrative Officer, you were the only American in the Administrative Section? Or did you have some others?*

LINDER: When I got there, there was a budget and fiscal officer, but that position was being phased out, and they were regionalizing the budget and fiscal operation out of Abidjan at that time. After I'd been there a short time, three months, I did most everything. I had a General Services Officer working with me.

Q: *But it was a pretty small embassy.*

LINDER: As I recall, there were about 13 of us there; that included a couple of AID contractors. We had Peace Corps there. It was the second generation, I think, of Peace Corps.

Q: *Who was the ambassador to Dahomey?*

LINDER: It was Quentin Knox, a black Ambassador, Foreign Service Officer. Q: He'd been in Civil Service.

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LINDER: As I recall he had a Ph.D., and had been in the INR, and I don't know whether he had had a previous Foreign Service assignment, but anyway, he was the ambassador when I got there. And I was there during the Biafran War.

Q: Which was very close, in Nigeria, next door.

LINDER: Right, next door. And the International Red Cross ran a relief operation out of Dahomey. They used the port of Cotonou to bring in supplies and things, and then they would take them into Biafra.

Q: Biafra was in the western part of Nigeria, or more to the east, closer to Cameroon or to Dahomey?

LINDER: Closer to Dahomey.

Q: Okay.

LINDER: And we had a National Guard air group over there from Glendale, California as I recall. They flew the old former double decker passenger planes.

Q: Cargo planes.

LINDER: They had been converted to cargo planes. They had been used as commercial airliners. They had two decks. Anyway, they were all old planes, and I think there's a National Guard unit out of Glendale that brought them over there. The mechanics were all Israelis. I think it was a CIA operation.

Q: Was it to provide food, or move refugees?

LINDER: They took in food, we'd also get some Congressmen and others who fly in to Biafra. They would get shot at. I mean, it wasn't a free fly zone. The Nigerians would shoot

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at them, and of course, the airstrip in Biafra was under artillery bombardment. There were a lot of stories and a lot of interest and excitement over all of that.

Q: Did you go into Biafra yourself?

LINDER: No, no, I never did that.

Q: And how about Lagos—did you...

LINDER: Yes, I used to go to Lagos quite often. We used to drive up over rough old roads, through a backwater crossing point between Dahomey and Nigeria.

Q: Two or three hours, maybe?

LINDER: As I recall, it was about a three hour trip. You had to go through military checkpoints. You felt you were in some jeopardy when you did this, but we used to buy a lot of stuff up there, and you had WACASS at that time, which stood for the West African Commissary and Supply System—they had big warehouses up there, and they used to run trucks and planes carrying supplies throughout Central and West Africa. Yes, we used to go up there, we'd buy a lot of stuff on the commercial market, and I made an arrangement up there with a guy I'd met in Jamaica who worked for Foremost Dairies and opened up and was running a reconstituted milk factory, processing plant, in Lagos. We used to buy our milk and other supplies from him and arranged to have them delivered to Cotonou. I made a lot of trips to Lagos, and they were very interesting.

Q: Was that one of your main challenges as Administrative Officer, to make sure that there was supply, just of food and commissary items?

LINDER: I opened a commissary while I was there. When I arrived they had a bulk buying arrangement, they'd buy things by case lots and then split it up. I set up a commissary. The main job was keeping the post going; you had to hustle around and make do, but it was a friendly little post, and the French leave behind a lot of amenities. I mean, it had a

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wonderful patisserie, you could get good bread, and they had a couple good restaurants there, and we got to know people in the French community quite well. They still ran things there.

Q: Okay, Perry, we're talking about the French presence and influence in Dahomey and Cotonou in, this would have been the late 1960's, and the French community was sizeable and influential, and it was still very much part of the French Zone.

LINDER: Yes, that was the case. The French ambassador there, he was the real Dean of the diplomatic corps, in the sense that he was very, very influential within the country.

Q: US interests were somewhat limited, I suppose.

LINDER: They were minimal. Another interesting aspect of the time I was there was that Union Oil was exploring offshore. There was oil in Nigeria, which was part of the reason for the Biafran War. But there were no producing oil wells in Dahomey. Union Oil opened an exploration operation there, and that was a great day for the embassy, because they brought in a school; up to that point, my kids went to a French school, they were young, kindergarten, no English school. They opened a school, they brought in a doctor, and we had an arrangement with them for medical services. They built up the port and put in a operation there to handle the ships that were drilling offshore. It was all very exciting, and it added a lot to the tour having Union Oil. That was the main US economic interest in Dahomey.

Q: I visited Cotonou in the late 1980's, and I remember that there was a Sheraton Hotel, a very nice American Club connected with the Embassy, and I remember a very pleasant, small but very appropriate residence for the United States Ambassador. Were any of those things there in your time? Probably not.

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LINDER: No, no, there was the Hotel de la Plage, which was kind of run down—everything was run down there. The French had made some investments when those countries became independent, when was that, in 1956?

Q: No, it was about 1960.

LINDER: 1960, yes. The French had built a large square, with some buildings around it; the presidential palace, and a conference hall, quite elaborate. I don't know what they expected from this conference site, but it didn't materialize. The Presidential Palace was still used, but weeds were growing up in the central plaza and the buildings were in disrepair. It was said that the French selected its civil servants from Dahomey. Dahomians were all over West Africa, and in positions of some responsibility...

Q: In other countries.

LINDER: In other countries. They were educated and selected to support the French civil service throughout West Africa.

Q: That was before independence.

LINDER: That was before independence, and to some degree after independence. These people were in positions throughout West Africa, and in international organizations as well. I know they had somebody in the ILO and in the United Nations and they were in influential positions. As time passed, of course, the other French West African countries moved these people out and put their own people in, so there was some regression of these people back to Dahomey. Dahomey didn't have any means of supporting itself. I mean, there was the hope of some oil, and that never really panned out. Union Oil found some oil there, but they capped it off. There wasn't at that point in time sufficient flow to make it commercially viable.

Q: What else did Dahomey have economically? It had what, cocoa, and nuts, and...

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LINDER: At the time, palm oil was its biggest commodity. It didn't have much in the way of cocoa; I know they had that next door in Ghana, but it was not an important commodity in Dahomey.

Q: What was the government like? You mentioned some of these very educated, qualified people, some of whom had come back. Was the quality of civil servants and government generally fairly decent, or...

LINDER: Yes, it wasn't bad.

Q: Was it a military government?

LINDER: No, when I got there, they had an elected government, and while I was there they had another election, and that election had three people running for the presidency, and their support was regionally based. The election was indecisive and they decided that all three would be president. But, one would be president for two years, and then two years, and then two years. A crazy scheme, which didn't work out. I left before the end of the first two-year presidency, and there was a military coup, and a major took over the government, and I think ran it for the next eight years.

Q: For a long time.

LINDER: Longer than that perhaps.

Q: And then he left office and somebody else succeeded him, and they allowed that to happen and now he's president again, elected this time.

LINDER: Anyway, that's while I was there. The embassy at that time was right next to the military camp, and maybe it still is, I don't know. We rented a compound; it was the embassy, and the ambassador's residence, and the USIS center. It was all in a big block, owned by Socolo, who had been the president before I got there.

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Q: And became president later, or was that his son?

LINDER: It was his son. We used to pay the rent and correspond with Madame Socolo, who was in Paris all of that time.

Q: I think that may be the same place where the embassy was when I visited in 1988, but the ambassador's residence was elsewhere, and I think USIS may be in a different location, or at least was at that time.

LINDER: It was a suitable operation; we didn't have any Marines when I was there, and would lock the place at night.

Q: The compound got a bit ramshackle; you would wander around from one place to another.

LINDER: That's right; it had been a private house that had been extended and added onto. We added a communications room and a vault, and while I was there we built a warehouse onto it.

Q: Dahomey has, of course, a very small coastline on the Gulf of Guinea, that extends quite a distance to the north, fairly narrow; did you travel inland quite a bit, to see Peace Corps volunteers or other business?

LINDER: Yes, I used to go to Parakou, which was up north. It was a good day's drive. It was an agricultural center in the interior. I went up there to an agricultural conference once, I flew up there with the French ambassador; he was the conference moderator, I was just a participant, represented the embassy.

Q: Did he have his own plane?

LINDER: No, we flew up on Air Afrique; they had a small aircraft resembling a little Dakota; I remember when we took off the windows all flew open, and we sat on bench seats;

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it was just a small plane, two-motors operated by Air Afrique, for internal flights. There was a game reserve up north, I went up to the game park, it was pretty rough and ready, but interesting. While I was there our embassy and Niger ordered a Peugeot, and it was delivered to the port of Dahomey. They needed someone to drive it to Niamey, so Roy Haverkamp, who was the DCM at the time, and I did that.

Q: In Cotonou.

LINDER: From Cotonou, we drove up to Niamey. Actually it was a lot of fun. It wasn't trackless, but it certainly wasn't a road, either, just a track across desert land.

Q: You got the Peugeot there safely.

LINDER: We got the Peugeot there safely.

Q: Did you, as Administrative Officer in Cotonou, have to do quite a bit in support of Embassy Niamey, or...

LINDER: No, that's the only incident that I recall. We were pretty self-sufficient. We had some contact with our Embassy in Togo, but I don't recall that we provided much support.

Q: How about the embassy in Abidjan—was it services throughout West Africa?

LINDER: Yes, as I recall, we had a regional security officer, and a regional budget and fiscal officer based in Abidjan. The B&F officer was a great person who really taught me budget and fiscal work.

Q: And the Defense Attach#, I think, was in Abidjan, probably.

LINDER: Yes, that's right.

Q: Okay, anything else we should talk about with reference to Cotonou?

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LINDER: Maybe a mention of the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps operation there was fairly sizeable; they were into animal traction and grain storage, wells, providing water. It was interesting; I would visit some of them. Those were good projects, you know, projects which produced results.

Q: Very specific.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: Concrete.

LINDER: So you get something done, and I think the volunteers had a feeling of satisfaction. They lived in pretty primitive conditions in countryside. Even in Cotonou, parts of it were very primitive, people still lived in tribal compounds. The blocks were fenced in, and people lived in these communities within the city, block by block.

Q: Ethnicity and then tribal origin or ethnic origin was very important in the capital, but of course, even more so...

LINDER: Even more important than in the countryside.

Q: And the Peace Corps volunteers not only were able to do something concrete and perhaps limited, realizable in a two-year or whatever time they were there, but also probably did a lot of good for them in terms of the experience they had.

LINDER: Oh, I think so, I mean, it was a broadening cultural experience, an experience in getting along and dealing and surviving in a strange, primitive environment.

Q: Did the administrative section of the embassy support them, or did they have their own...

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LINDER: We provided a lot of support to the Peace Corps. They had a doctor; at least some of the time. We worked very closely with them. There were a lot of health problems over there at that time, there were a lot of reasons for concern about living in West Africa, not a healthy place.

Q: Did the embassy have a doctor or a nurse?

LINDER: No, we didn't have a nurse; our doctor was in Lagos.

Q: And who would visit periodically if there was a need.

LINDER: Right. But we had medical evacuations; that was always a big concern, that and giving inoculations and serums and antidotes for snake bites. Fortunately, I never had to administer any of them, but we had black mamba, green mamba, all of this serum at the ready. But as I said before, the Union Oil Company set up a clinic, and they had a great doctor. He was an Irishman. He drank, not only drank, but he used to eat the glasses. I mean, he could eat a water glass. If you went to see him in the clinic in the morning, he wasn't in very good shape, but he was a good doctor. His wife, I remember, came out at one time; she was a doctor, too. She could only put up with him and conditions for about three days, and then she went back home.

Q: Sounds like characters out of Graham Greene.

LINDER: Speaking of that, The Comedians, Graham Greene's book was filmed in Cotonou.

Q: While you were there?

LINDER: No, unfortunately, just before I got there. I got there about the time they all left, but Elizabeth Taylor, and Burton, and Alec Guinness, they were all down there.

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Q: They must have left some legacy.

LINDER: Yes, stories and impressions. I'm sorry I missed that.

Q: I'm sure I've seen the movie, but its been awhile. When Graham Greene actually wrote the book, was it about Dahomey?

LINDER: No, it was about Haiti.

Q: Okay. When you had to do a medical evacuation, where were patients taken? To Germany to an American hospital, or somewhere in Africa?

LINDER: We sent them to France or Italy. Up country there was an Italian hospital run by Italian nuns, and we used that. When we evacuated, I think we evacuated to Paris. We never brought in a plane while I was there and did an evacuation in that way, but we had several evacuations on commercial aircraft.

Q: And most of the flights in and out of Cotonou were to France, to Paris.

LINDER: Yes, that's right. So I think that was our evacuation spot.

Q: And Air Afrique operated to Abidjan and...

LINDER: Yes, Pan American also serviced Cotonou at that time.

Q: To Cotonou?

LINDER: Yes.

Q: A couple of times a week?

LINDER: Yes, once or twice a week.

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Q: There were, could be, kind of several places in West Africa, then I think eventually they went across to Nairobi, or...

LINDER: Yes, they did Dakar, Monrovia, Lagos.

Q: Accra, I think.

LINDER: Yes, I think maybe one time a week. There was some problem; I think it used to go all the way down to South Africa, but you know, with the boycott there were restrictions on the service.

Q: Were there American missionaries in Dahomey?

LINDER: Yes, there were American missionaries; again, mostly up country. And Texaco was there. It was interesting. I come from a small town in northern California, the Texaco manager, a young fellow, was from my hometown. Unbelievable the way some things happen.

Q: Now Texaco was also doing drilling offshore?

LINDER: No, no, they had a commercial operation there.

Q: Were there other American business beside Union and Texaco?

LINDER: I can't recall that there were, no, those were the only two American companies. On the medical side, one interesting incident: up country there was a hospital run by nuns. I think it was supported by a Dutch Catholic organization. And they treated a nomadic tribe up there that had cattle, and they would move around in that area up north. I went up there and visited that hospital, and the doctor. He wasn't really a doctor, he was just what we would call a medical technician.

Q: A medical practitioner?

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LINDER: He was a medical practitioner. But anyway, he regularly performed major operations and was very highly regarded. I remember they showed me what they used for bandages when they operated, for sterile bandaging, they used newspapers.

Q: Pretty basic.

LINDER: It was interesting to see how basic this was. The guy really did serious operations, under very primitive conditions. I guess he was the only source available. Needless to say, we never used that hospital.

Q: But it sounds like overall that your assignment to Cotonou was very positive both in terms of your experience there, but also in terms of doing administrative work.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: After maybe a, well, less than fully satisfactory experience in Honduras.

LINDER: Right, it really was; personally, for me it was a very interesting place, and professionally, I learned a lot, because I did it all, all the basic stuff: I did the security clearances and reports, and I did the budget, we had medical emergencies, theft and embezzlement.

Q: Personnel.

LINDER: Yes, and I learned the whole budget and fiscal operation; as I say, I had a really good teacher from Abidjan who would come down and help.

Q: How were your foreign service nationals—were they some good people?

LINDER: They were okay. We had one fraud case where one of the FSN's had gotten away with some money. It was a typical sort of thing; he used to pay all of the gasoline bills; everybody was giving him their money, and he was supposed to pay their bill. Well,

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there were a lot of problems: the bills didn't arrive on time, and it was always hard to match things up exactly, but anyway we found out that we were way in arrears. I had to investigate and work up a case to fire this guy. But overall, they were pretty good. I had one incident where an FSN came in to see me because one of the other FSN's was trying to use juju on him, use magic to disturb or get rid of him.

Q: What did you do?

LINDER: I listened and I don't think there was really all that much I could do, although I don't recall that it ever became more serious. However, we had a nanny, a local hired African that looked after our smallest child, and we took her on to the next post from which she went back to Dahomey on a visit. She was back in Dahomey for about two days, and we got word from the embassy that she had been poisoned and died. There was a lot of poisoning, and it was—I won't say accepted, but I would say there was a fear of it and it was a common way of dealing with problems in Dahomey. People were very concerned and cautious about what they ate and who it came from. It was something not to be taken lightly.

Q: It was very real.

LINDER: It was a very real thing, yes.

Q: So you were in Cotonou about two years. You mentioned that Clinton Knox had been ambassador first and Roy Haverkamp was DCM. Did another ambassador come while you were there, or did...

LINDER: Yes, Matt Looram, and that was a wonderful experience as well. Matt Looram's wife, Bettina was from the Rothschild family out of Austria, and a wonderful person. I mean, he was a good ambassador and an impressive person in his own right, but I thought her even more so. She was very gracious and rearranged and made a big difference in

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the residence. You would visit her and she'd have champagne. She was just very helpful, wonderful for the community.

Q: Was he a career Foreign Service Officer?

LINDER: He was a career Foreign Service Officer. That was his first ambassadorial assignment. When Clinton Knox was there, the DCM was John Clingerman.

Q: Okay. And when you finished in Dahomey, what was your next assignment? This would have been about 1970, I think.

LINDER: I went to the US Mission in NATO, and I was the Deputy Administrative Officer.

Q: In the mission.

LINDER: In the US Mission. And the Administrative Officer by tradition was a military officer, so a Colonel headed the administrative operation there, and I was his deputy.

Q: And you had a large administrative section, or did you rely on the embassy to some extent for administrative support?

LINDER: We relied on the embassy, but we got a lot of support from the military too. We had a large joint communications section, joint in that it was staffed by both State and military communicators.

Q: And you were physically located at the NATO headquarters?

LINDER: That's right.

Q: You had a lot of visitors to deal with.

LINDER: Sure, twice a year the Secretary of Defense would come out there and then we had others.

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Q: Secretary of State would come sometimes.

LINDER: The Secretary of State as well. We had lots of visitors. That was handled through the general administrative section of the embassy. We were involved, of course, but the JAS provided the bulk of the support.

Q: And besides the embassy, there was also the US Mission to the European Community.

LINDER: Yes, the US Mission to the European Community, and within NATO, you also had the US Defense Committee, which was headed by a general, and was a DOD mission. It was a very large mission, not a component of the US Mission to NATO, it was separate.

Q: With probably mostly Defense Department...

LINDER: All Defense Department. The US Mission to NATO was a mix, Defense and State Department.

Q: Headed by the US representative, who was supported or came from the State Department, probably.

LINDER: That's right, with the title of Ambassador.

Q: Who was the US rep when you were there?

LINDER: I can't recall; maybe as we talk it'll come to me. There were a couple of them while I was there, we didn't just have one. I was only in the US Mission to NATO for one year. Then the colonel managed to convert to Foreign Service, and became a Foreign Service Reserve Officer, and remained in the position.

Q: Retired from the military.

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LINDER: Retired from the military as a colonel, became an FSR2, which is the equivalent of an FE-OC today, and when that happened, I had to go, because the top position was now State Department, and my position had to be filled by a military officer. So I went over to the embassy as Personnel Officer. I was Personnel Officer in the embassy for two years; I left Brussels in '73.

Q: And you worked for the Administrative Counselor at the Embassy.

LINDER: Yes, I worked for the Administrative Counselor.

Q: But you dealt on personnel issues, I suppose, with the other missions as well, the missions....

LINDER: Yes, the Personnel Officer is responsible for the US Mission to NATO, USAU and the Embassy.

Q: And that would be FSN's and other personnel matters.

LINDER: Mostly FSN's, but other personnel matters as well. While I was in the US Mission to NATO, I sat on two NATO committees, two housekeeping committees, one of them dealt with the cafeteria, a big issue at the time.

Q: At NATO headquarters.

LINDER: At NATO headquarters, yes. And that was interesting; that was my first experience representing the US at AU an international organization. There was a chairman, translators, and the French always spoke in French....

Q: You sat behind a sign that said, "United States of America".

LINDER: Exactly. And reported on what went on in the meeting, although I'm sure it wasn't of much interest to anyone outside of the Mission.

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Q: Well, it was of interest to anybody who ate at the cafeteria.

LINDER: Right. NATO had its own employees, its international staff. We used to get involved in the placement of Americans in staff positions. The Security Officer there was always an American.

Q: At the international staff.

LINDER: Yes, and we had Americans in other key positions. The appointments were made through the Mission and the State Department.

Q: When you moved over to the embassy, was there a large administrative section? I mean,...

LINDER: Oh, a big operation, yes; an Administrative Counselor, an Administrative Officer who was a senior officer himself, plus all the usual sections. The embassy had very good local employees; many of them were British. They had come over there during the war, married Belgium girls and stayed on and become part of the embassy. We were beginning to use different automated devices at that time, 1970, Brussels was in the forefront in the use of computers. It started in handling visits. We had so many visits we had an office there that just did that, arranged visits, and so forth, and of course a lot of that stuff is repetitive. I mean, you did the same stuff every time, you got to keep track of a lot of people, a lot of names, a lot of numbers, vehicles, movements. And we had a fellow, I think he was British, working in that office, and he began to develop computer applications for that sort of thing, and I think that was one of the first places it started.

Q: Besides these various activities in Brussels itself, was the embassy administrative side, personnel side, did you have any Europe-wide, western Europe-wide regional responsibilities, or not?

LINDER: Not that I recall. I can't recall that we did.

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Q: Was there a consulate in Antwerp at that time?

LINDER: Yes, there was, and I filled in down there. The consul was off on home leave and I went down there for maybe a month or so as consul. As I recall, it was a two-, maybe three-person consulate.

Q: And there's pressure at that time.

LINDER: There was pressure at that time to downsize it.

Q: This was all quite a contrast with Cotonou, where you did everything yourself, the entire post was small, the country was small. Of course, Belgium is small, but ...

LINDER: In terms of the administration, it was a big operation. It was an eye opener to me, particularly all the visits and how they were handled, and the personnel operation was much more sophisticated—you were dealing with a much more sophisticated workforce. You were also dealing not only with a European workforce, but with a European labor code. It's very different from what we have in the United States, and something that in my subsequent career was very helpful, because I had other posts in Europe, and I had a lot to do with personnel issues and labor law and labor problems within the European community. In those days we used to do our own wage surveys. That was the last time I ever did a wage survey, after that State had teams that would come out from Washington and do them. But it was interesting. I interviewed the personnel officer at the European Commission headquarters of the European Economic Community.

Q: Well, it was probably still called the European Economic Community, and the Commission was the kind of headquarters staff.

LINDER: Yes. What a good arrangement those employees had...it was a great place to work; they had so many benefits. They really looked after themselves. I'm sure it is the same at the UN, but maybe not as generous as the European Commission.

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Q: And they were able to avoid some of the disincentives, maybe taxes...

LINDER: I know they didn't have to pay taxes, and they got all of these allowances, and special arrangements, and of course vacations. In Europe everybody gets at least a month vacation, and trips home and all of that. I also interviewed IBM and other international companies. That was interesting; these big American companies had very few Americans working for them; actually the whole staff was often European.

Q: And Brussels had already become quite a center for American companies headquartered in Europe, based in Europe. Anything else we should talk about in connection with Brussels, or are you ready to go on to your next assignment, which I think was to Amman, Jordan, in '73. So you're in Brussels about three years between these two different assignments.

LINDER: Yes When I got there, John Eisenhower was the ambassador.

Q: To Belgium.

LINDER: To Belgium, yes. And he was replaced by Strausz-Hup#.

Q: Robert Strausz-Hup#?

LINDER: Yes, an interesting man. He liked to play tennis, and he'd call me out regularly to go play tennis with him. He was a real gentleman, and an interesting person. It was said that he was a vice consul in the Austro-Hungarian Empire's foreign service; I don't know. But a courtly gentleman with very definite ideas about NATO. And actually, he later became US representative at NATO.

Q: Now, was Belgium his first time to be ambassador?

LINDER: He'd been to Ceylon; Ceylon was his first ambassadorial post.

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Q: And later he was in Morocco and Turkey and at NATO, and maybe somewhere else.

LINDER: I think from Belgium he went to Sweden. It was interesting that Matthew Loomer, the ambassador in Dahomey, was slated for the Swedish slot, he was going to be ambassador in Sweden, and he didn't get it because of Strausz-Hupé, and he quit the Foreign Service at that point and went with his wife to Austria. They had a big property there and a chalet and they opened up a big ski resort.

Q: Small world.

LINDER: Brussels was a fascinating assignment. Again I learned a lot, and a lot of things happened there. I left there in 1973 and went to Jordan.

Q: And Jordan had lots of visitors; this was right after the war, I think.

LINDER: I got there before the war, so I was there during the '73 war.

Q: Which was September...

LINDER: It was called a War of Atonement by the Israelis, and I don't know, we just call it the...

Q: Yom Kippur?

LINDER: Yes, that's right, Yom Kippur War.

Q: But it just lasted a short time, I believe.

LINDER: Yes, it only lasted about seven or eight days. But we went through the full drill.

Q: Now, what was your position in Amman, you were Administrative Officer?

LINDER: I was Administrative Officer there.

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Q: Senior Administrative Officer for the entire post.

LINDER: Yes, I was Administrative Officer, and there was a GSO who happened to be an AID employee, and we had a security officer, and communications section.

Q: You'd just arrived earlier in '73, then, when that war took place.

LINDER: I arrived just shortly before it broke out. Dean Brown was the ambassador. The embassy was at the point where it was beginning to build up again after the civil war, black September for the PLO.

Q: That was 1970.

LINDER: Yes. We moved our embassy after all of that happened, but it was still pretty minimal. It was just beginning to build up, and Dean Brown was resisting the buildup. He didn't think we needed to put in a lot of AID people and bring over a big military establishment, and so forth, so he was dragging his feet.

Q: And when you got there, there was probably a lot of pressure on the administrative section, because in fact, there probably had been people arriving.

LINDER: That's right, and they continued to arrive while I was there. USAID did establish a mission there.

Q: With its own administrative...

LINDER: No, it was a joint operation, and it worked quite well. The GSO was an AID guy, and they didn't have an Executive Officer, so we dealt directly with them; it was a good arrangement. USIS was there as well.

Q: No Peace Corps, I suppose.

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LINDER: There was no Peace Corps, no.

Q: Was there an evacuation at the time of the war?

LINDER: No, we were all set to evacuate. We had it all worked out and coordinated, and we were going through the exercise of the countdown, and we were working with the other embassies. We had it all planned.

Q: It did not take place because the war ended?

LINDER: Yes, and Jordan managed to stay out of the war.

Q: Even though it was very close.

LINDER: Even though it was very close. The planes would fly over, Amman was blacked out, and you could hear the guns. But only in the last and final day did the Jordanians send their tank brigade into the Golan, but they never engaged with the Israelis. Cleverly, they were able to make the right sounds and say the right things, but not get themselves involved militarily. And as a consequence, we didn't have to evacuate. But we understood at the time that Jordan had been warned by the Israelis, that if you make any belligerent move toward Israel, we're not going to think twice about it, we're going to flatten you.

Q: "We" the Israelis.

LINDER: The Israelis. We had that to worry about. It was, as you can imagine, a very tense time. I don't know how long it lasted in days, but I mean, it was twenty-four hours a day for ten days.

Q: If you had evacuated the embassy, your families, it would have been done by air, or over land?

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LINDER: Well, it would have been dependent on the conditions; we had both worked out; we could have gone by air, convoys to the airport and out by air. I know a couple of other strips that we could have as alternatives to the main airport. And then also, we could have gotten out by Saudi Arabia.

Q: But if you had undertaken an air evacuation, there probably would have had to have been a cease fire arrangement, an understanding that there wasn't going to be an attack on the airport at the time.

LINDER: Yes. It was interesting to me, the different reactions. We had quite a military operation there, too. Well, we provided military equipment and assistance to the Jordanians, so we had a taut operation; it wasn't huge, but we had military people there. But it was interesting the different reactions of people to the threat, and I learned a lot about human nature, and you know, just by labels you couldn't tell how people were going to react in a situation like that. A lot of different ways.

Q: After the war ended, what was the situation in the embassy? Did our buildup AID increase or was that kind of suspended for awhile?

LINDER: No, I don't think there was any change. I mean, the war ended, and things went on, and I don't recall that it made any change in our policy toward Jordan.

I should mention that when the thing broke out, Dean Brown was out of the country. Pierre Graham was DCM.

Q: And charge.

LINDER: And charge. Anyway...

Q: Perry, we're talking about your assignment in Amman, Jordan as Administrative Officer; I think we were talking when we finished the other tape about Ambassador Dean Brown

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and how he reacted particularly to the war, when he wasn't in country at the time it started. Why don't you finish what you were saying about that if you can remember.

LINDER: Yes, he was someplace in Europe, I don't remember where, but we were in touch with him, and he was frantic about getting back, and of course, it wasn't easy to get in; the airport had been closed, and commercially it just couldn't be done. He finally worked something out where he came into Saudi Arabia and got a light plane and flew to a desert strip in Saudi Arabia that was up near the border with Jordan. We sent a couple of cars to pick him up and brought him back. I guess he got back about two or three days before the whole thing ended, but it was exciting. He's a great Ambassador, a very dynamic, charismatic person who's a lot of fun to be around and to work with.

Q: He let you do the administrative work?

LINDER: Very much so, very much so. I'd go by his office and he'd be playing Solitaire. He let things run themselves; he knew what was happening, he didn't feel compelled to mix into everything. When there was something important happening, he was right there, he knew all about it, and he took an active part in it. But otherwise, he had the ability, which I think is very good, to let things go, let competent people handle things, and not mess with them.

Q: And not feel he had to do it all himself, second-guess.

LINDER: To be able to sit up there and play Solitaire at his desk; I've never seen any other ambassador doing that. Anyway, it was a very tense time; very interesting.

Q: What was the main thing that happened after the war; I know that there were visits by the Secretary of State and others.

LINDER: Yes, that's the other thing that stands out from the time I was there, during the Kissinger visits, the shuttle diplomacy. He came in there every month, I would say; there

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must have been 12 visits while I was there. In the first visit, Tom Pickering was with him, because I think he was the head of the Secretariat at that time, and we had some rumors that Pickering might be the next ambassador, and sure enough, he replaced Dean Brown.

Q: While you were there.

LINDER: While I was there. And for most of the Kissinger visits, he was there as ambassador.

Q: Was he able to play Solitaire?

LINDER: That was not his style, although he, too, was a wonderful person to work for, and I worked for him another time after that, and we've remained friends. But he had tremendously broad interests in terms of traveling, in terms of machinery, everything that came within his purview he was interested in, and seemed to acquire all the knowledge that one could have about any subject very, very quickly.

Q: To come back to the Kissinger shuttle, as Administrative Officer you obviously had to provide cars and support and everything for that. Did you usually have a fair amount of warning to make those preparations, and did it become kind of a routine, or was it each one a bit frantic?

LINDER: No, it became somewhat routine, because there were so many of them. As I say, I think there were 12 visits while I was there, and I was there at the first visit. When we first got the news he was coming, of course we were a small embassy, and I think with just a charge, Pierre Graham, I don't think that we had an ambassador. So, that was a first for me, a first for probably all of us. Shuttle diplomacy was a new phenomenon. It had been a long time, if ever, since a Secretary of State had visited Jordan.

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But we geared up, worked closely with the Palace. At that time, when Kissinger first came to work in the State Department, he was supported by the Secret Service, not by the State Department's security.

Q: Because he had come from the White House.

LINDER: He'd come from the White House, and he knew the people, and for whatever reason, he kept them. So they would send the Secret Service person as advance. Once we'd gotten a telegram and made our initial response in preparation for the visit, we went up to the Palace, and we dealt with their Chief of Protocol, a Circassian who worked at the Palace. I say Circassian just because a lot of people up at the Palace were Circassian. Anyway, he was a very knowledgeable guy, I think he had gone to UCLA, and had managed many visits the King and his family had made to the United States, and he knew the Secret Service people by first name, and he knew how they operated. So anyway, we would go up to the palace, we'd sit in his office, and I guess like most Arab functionaries, it'd be an office with a lot of big easy chairs along the wall, and telephones, and he had people serving coffee, people all dressed in uniforms, and the coffee was just wonderful. People would come in and out while we were there talking to him, and would ask questions and he'd have to break off and deal with their subject matter, telephone calls would come in, so it was a long, long process when you'd go up there. But he was a charming man, and very astute, and very, very, capable, and you know, we would work things out with him about the security, the motorcade, and how we were going to get into the airport, what the ceremony would be there, where Kissinger and his entourage would stay, and they always stayed at the guest house on the palace...I forget the name of the palace, but it was the palace right there in Amman, and it was the Prince's guest house. And the King would be out at the airport to meet Kissinger, and we had the usual, you know, give and take, push and pull, with Security, and what we would do and what they would do, but it was eased because of the experience that the Jordanians had working with the US security and protocol.

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Q: As I recall, this period of, as you say, shuttle diplomacy, there were times where nobody seemed to know what was going to happen the next day, it would depend on the discussion with the Israeli's or the Egyptians...

LINDER: That's true.

Q: ...and all of a sudden he'd go the next day to Damascus or to Amman. That happened sometimes?

LINDER: Right, that happened sometimes, but we knew he was in the region, so we were prepared. After the first two visits, we had the drill down pretty well, so we could do it, and set up things, and take care of it. At least once, and maybe twice, we went to Aqaba. The King had a compound at Aqaba, and we would set up there. Of course, that was a different matter, because that was a long way from the embassy, and we had to transport everything over there. We'd do that by car, but one visit was during the winter, it snowed, and you had to go over some high pass to get over to Aqaba.

Q: Because Aqaba's on the coast.

LINDER: We were afraid we couldn't get there, so it was decided that we would transport the stuff by aircraft, and it would go by Alia, which was the national airlines.

Q: For Jordan.

LINDER: Yes. Anyway, we loaded up the aircraft, it was a regular commercial airliner, and we were all on the plane, and we take off and we're in the air, and then the pilot comes on, "This is your pilot, Jose, speaking. We're now..." It was the King, he was flying the plane! And you know, we got over there in Aqaba, and we set up on the compound, a very small compound, so you could see everybody, and the King was very visible and friendly. He was a ham radio operator, he used to get together with the Marine security guards, he'd come to the Marine house. He was a person that liked people, and had many manly

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interests. He liked to hunt, and go-carting. It was a small community there in Amman. I did know Princess Muna quite well, she was the King's second wife.

Q: He was not yet married to his American wife.

LINDER: No. His third wife was a Palestinian, and she died in a helicopter crash.

Q: Was that Alia, or something?

LINDER: Yes. She died in a helicopter crash, and then he married Halaby, his present wife.

Q: Besides the war situation, the Kissinger shuttle diplomacy, the King, or the Palace, what are some of the other things that you particularly remember of your....

LINDER: Well, one other big event you can't ignore is that Nixon came to Jordan after or during Watergate, on his last international tour.

Q: That was just before he resigned.

LINDER: Yes, that one was big, that was my first Presidential. I mean, I had been involved to a degree in Kingston, Jamaica, with a Vice Presidential visit...

Q: For the inauguration, for the independence ceremony.

LINDER: Yes, for the independence. But this was a Presidential visit. A month before the event, this White House team came out, it was headed by the fellow who was noted for managing the balloon drop at the Republican convention in Miami.

Q: Was that Ron Walker?

LINDER: I can't remember his name. But anyway, it was a team of Republican supporters. None of them were professional at this. None of them had ever been overseas before,

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and had no idea about a place such as Jordan, Moslem culture and all of that. They pretty much let us handle it.

Q: How long was President Nixon in Jordan?

LINDER: I think Nixon was there two days.

Q: Did he go outside of Amman, to Petra, or...

LINDER: No, no, he was just there a couple days. I think just overnight. He stayed in a private house, Ben Shacker, who was head of the Army, or of national defense. He let them use his house, right on the edge of town. And I don't remember where the conference itself was held. We took over all of the hotels. The press was there in great numbers. There was only limited hotel space in Amman. There were a thousand people. It was really something. Nixon looked awful. He was in bad health, and they painted him orange for the television cameras. He was really kind of a pitiful sight.

Q: Was this toward the end of that trip, or beginning, because he went to several other places, as I recall.

LINDER: I think it was the beginning, but I can't say for sure. I don't think it was the first stop.

Q: Was Kissinger with him, do you remember?

LINDER: I don't remember, though he must have been with the President. Of course, there was a big State Department contingency there as well.

Q: Tom Pickering was ambassador?

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LINDER: Tom was our ambassador, and of course, he did everything in his own fine way; I'm sure he had all the substantive part well covered. But I really managed that whole thing, and for me, it was a very gratifying experience.

Q: It went smoothly, no major hangups.

LINDER: It went smoothly, I met a lot of people. Counterparts on the administrative side. John Thomas was out there, Harvey Buffalo was his assistant at that time, there were all kinds of people. And of course, the ridiculous things that all of these strap-hangers want, and I mean I'm not talking about John Thomas now, but you know, I mean, other people that come along, doctors and all of these people who don't have much to do. Anyway, it was quite an experience, as were all of those visits. I mean, the visits were, again, Larry Eagleburger used to come out, and...

Q: What was his, what was he doing at the time, was he with Kissinger, or...

LINDER: Yes, in the beginning, he was with Kissinger, then Ray Seitz was a junior officer at that time, he used to come out. Jerry Bremen frequently accompanied Kissinger.

Q: Oh, Jerry Bremer.

LINDER: All of the other people that dealt with the Middle East, they were all there, McCloskey, used to come out. I remember George Vest, briefly, he was not happy working with Kissinger.

Q: What, besides, well, with the visits you had to communicate coordinate with other posts, so I'm sure we're dealing with the same visit on the circuit or shuttle or whatever. Other than that, how about on sort of a routine basis, did you have much to do, for example, the consulate with Jerusalem, or the embassy in Tel Aviv, or the embassy in Damascus?

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LINDER: We used to run a regular courier service across the Jordan River, the Allenby Bridge over to Jerusalem, and so we maintained regular contact with the consulate there. We didn't go into Tel Aviv.

Q: And you could do that even after the war had changed things?

LINDER: Yes. It was an interesting arrangement: we would drive our car down to the bridge, and we'd do that ourselves, because we didn't use a Jordanian driver. You'd use an embassy car, and there would usually be two of us. We'd have the pouch, we'd drive down to the bridge, we'd get out and change license plates; put on Israeli plates, and go across the bridge. Of course, we had to go through controls on both sides. The controls on the Israeli side were much more onerous than on the Jordanian side. The Jordanians were very easy going, friendly about it. It was routine, but it never seemed to be quite routine over on the Israeli side.

Q: And then when you'd go back, you'd reverse the procedure.

LINDER: We'd reverse the procedure; we'd stop and change the plates on the Israeli side, just at the bridge, and then cross back over.

Q: Did you get supplies, do procurement, shop in Jerusalem, or didn't really need to do that.

LINDER: No, we didn't need to do that, but we always enjoyed going over to Jerusalem, typically we'd stay at the American Colony Hotel, which was in the old, what you'd call the Arab side...

Q: East Jerusalem.

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LINDER: Yes, East Jerusalem. The old city, was just fascinating, one of those places that just gives you a thrill when you see it, kind of grabs you. So that was interesting. We knew the people in the consulate in Jerusalem, and we'd see them.

Q: The FSN's that you had in Amman, the Foreign Service Nationals, were mostly Jordanian, or were some Palestinian, or...?

LINDER: Jordanian and Palestinian. I guess maybe 50% of Jordan's population was Palestinian at that time. We had Armenians working in the Embassy. At that time, up until '75 we still used Beirut. Our regional security officer was in Beirut. Later the Embassy got its own security officer. I handled security in the beginning, and then introduced and settled the new security officer into Amman. We used the American University hospital in Beirut.

Q: Was security a major issue of concern in, because terrorism and all these things came with it later, so was it a major consideration for you?

LINDER: Yes, it was always a major consideration. Before I got there, a military officer was shot; somebody rang his doorbell and when he answered the doorbell, they shot him. And that happened just before I got there. And there were always things to be concerned about on security. The embassy itself was a real fortress; it was a small apartment building that had been converted into an embassy. They had put a fence all around it, a high fence, with various devices; the front door was not a welcoming door, it was a locked, secure door. A Jordanian armored vehicle was frequently parked on the street before the entrance. We were right across from the Intercontinental Hotel, which was the main hotel in town.

Q: And all this was before the civil war kind of got going in Lebanon, or before the takeover of the embassy in Tehran.

LINDER: Yes. Our concern wasn't from the Jordanian government, obviously, but the Jordanian government was not popular with the PLO and other groups.

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Q: Particularly after they had...

LINDER: Kicked them out.

Q: Kicked them out in 1970, by September. And of course, there had been terrorist hijackings and other incidents in the Middle East already.

LINDER: My office was on the ground floor in the back of the embassy, and there was an old derelict house behind us. A rocket had been set up back there to go off, to fire against the embassy, but it had been picked up and had been monitored by the Jordanians, and I suppose by our own people, and so, before it was set to go off, they removed it. But that's pretty close! There were people in the embassy that found it very hard to work in that environment. Security was a major concern all the time.

Q: You didn't speak Arabic; was that a problem for you, or was English pretty widely used?

LINDER: Not really, English was widely used. For me it wasn't a handicap not to speak Arabic. We had the usual language classes at the embassy that you could take, you could learn a little to get by in restaurants and in the streets, and so forth.

We could also go to Damascus, and until 1975 to Beirut. In '75, Beirut went to pieces, and a lot of changes occurred at that time.

But first, let me talk a little bit about Syria. Again, shortly before I got there, a military attach# and his wife, and they had a child with them, had been traveling from Jordan to Beirut or vice versa from Beirut back to Jordan. They had to go through Syria and were picked up and held, and mistreated. I don't really know the whole story, but it was a very traumatic event, not only for him and his family, but for people in the embassy. So there was a lot of concern about Syria. When I first got there, we didn't go to Syria. But I guess after the shuttle diplomacy got underway relations eased. I made several trips, and it was

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an interesting place to go, a great place to shop, and Damascus is one of the great cities of the world.

Q: And you could go up there essentially for a private trip, as opposed to taking the pouch or anything...

LINDER: That's right, we'd go on a private trip. And we would drive across the Golan Heights. You'd see all the tank revetments in place there; you didn't often see tanks, but you'd see a lot of military, and on one side of the road, you'd pass the SAM missile sites...

Q: Which were Syrian, or

LINDER: No, Syrian. It was all through Syria.

Q: Because it was in the '73 war that Israel took control of the Heights.

LINDER: Yes. Well, a part of it. The highway between Amman and Damascus went across the Golan Heights on the Syrian side.

Q: Not in the Israeli-occupied site.

LINDER: Right, but the military establishment was very visible. I remember once coming back, my car broke down, an old Volvo, broke down right in front of one of those SAM missile sites. And immediately I had all kinds of people around the car, and...

Q: "Why did you stop?"

LINDER: Exactly. Anyway, I finally got the thing going, and we went on our way. But it was always a little bit tense in Syria.

Q: Could you make private trips with your family to Jerusalem, or only when you took the pouch and were a courier?

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LINDER: A family member could go with you when you took the pouch, but...

Q: But you really had to be an official.

LINDER: That's the only way when I was there. By the time I left in '76, they'd begun to have some tourism by a mutual agreement between Israel and Jordan. They were bringing people in by air on a package deal, those included Jordan.

Q: And then cross into Israel, or vice versa.

LINDER: Right, it was arranged like that.

Q: In Jordan itself, you got to Petra, and did a lot of people, visitors, want to go there, was that sort of a place you went to frequently, or not?

LINDER: I went to Petra several times with my family; we used to go down to Aqaba, it was a lot of fun. Again, it was very primitive while I was there. I In Aqaba, there was just a couple of marginal hotels. When I went to Petra, there wasn't any hotel; we stayed in a cave. I remember I got up early one morning and went into the kitchen; I was there with two of my kids at the time, the place was abandoned; I didn't see anyone in the structure, which was the hotel, we stayed in a room in a cave. The kitchen was just crawling with bugs and cockroaches. it was a very primitive. But a fascinating place. When I was there I rented a couple mules and a guide, and we went way up in the hills. There were ancient sites to visit, and it was a fascinating place; nobody around, you might run across a Bedouin here and there. But that was something you could do. There were a lot of things to do in Jordan, really. I was fascinated by the valley, and...

Q: The Jordan Valley.

LINDER: The Jordan Valley, and all the old sights there. We used to go down there, my wife took an archeological course and we had good friends who were involved in

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archeology. Pickering became very interested in archeology in Jordan and did a lot to encourage participation by people. But we used to go down into the Jordan Valley on a Thursdays, our weekend, we worked Saturdays and Sundays, and...

Q: You'd have off Thursday and Saturday?

LINDER: Yes, Thursday and Friday. But you could poke around in the valley at some of the sites. There was so many shards, a lot of it on the surface; you could pull out pots and things like that; it was a lot of fun.

Q: Did you actually go down to the Dead Sea, then, too? On the Jordanian side?

LINDER: Yes, we got to the Dead Sea. We had a Scout group at the American school, and once I went down with the Scouts and camped beside the Dead Sea.

Q: You talked about some of the region, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem. I have to ask you one other question in terms of the period that you were there: Cyprus blew up in 1974, a coup against Makarios, the Turks came in, the embassy was evacuated to Beirut from Nicosia. Did you get involved at all in any of that, there was no impact on Jordan or the embassy in Amman.

LINDER: No, no.

Q: Anything else that you'd want to say about your time in Amman?

LINDER: In the beginning, we went over to Beirut, and we used to do a lot of procurement over there; we bought household furniture over there, and carpeting, and so forth and so on.

Q: The State Department FSI Arabic Language School was there.

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LINDER: That's right. We used to get students after a year at the Arabic Language School, they would sometimes put some students in the University in Amman. They'd send them to Jordan, so they would be associated with the embassy, but basically, as a follow-on to their language training. I used to go over to Beirut, and I remember the last time I went over there, there was a lot of turmoil, this must have been in '75. We had some problems with some vehicles that we couldn't get out of customs, and I went into what was then a PLO controlled area to recover the car. In retrospect it was lucky I didn't get kidnaped, because that sort of thing was just beginning to happen.

Q: Well, the PLO was...

LINDER: They were there, their camps were there, but I didn't appreciate the risk at the time, in some of the things we were doing, and places I was going.

Q: But you didn't have any direct problem, in retrospect?

LINDER: No, I didn't, but my wife was up there, Judy was up there at a hospital, and she was there when the fighting really started, and there was a huge explosion and it broke windows in the hospital, and the nurses, Judy told me, would come in, and cry and crawl under the bed. Things were really in disarray. I was very concerned about how was I going to get her back. The major who was head of the Marine detachment in Beirut, put her in a car, she had to lay down on the floor of the car, and they raced to the airport. The road to the airport the was controlled by the PLO because there were several camps along the way. There was shooting and firing, but she got out okay.

Q: And flew from there to Amman?

LINDER: Yes, flew from there to Amman. But once Beirut blew up, it was no longer a safe place, a lot of money and companies and interests started moving to Amman. And Amman really began to take off in '76. New hotels started going up, they started developing Aqaba

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as a resort, new businesses opened; there was a lot of inflow as a result of the destruction of Beirut.

Q: That's very interesting, because again, coming back to Cyprus, after the troubles in '74, the economy of particularly Greek Cyprus really began to revive in about '76 to a considerable extent, because of the outflow from Beirut, that some of that money, that capital, that refuge people were seeking, they went to Cyprus, as well as to Amman, and I think to Athens, and...

LINDER: They went to Athens as well. Later I was in Athens, and there was a large Lebanese community there..

Q: They went several different directions, I guess is what I'm saying, and that's interesting that it had that impact in Jordan, and led to hotels, and obviously, capital came in, and...

LINDER: Right, right.

Q: Okay, I think we maybe ought to stop at this point and when we pick up again, we'll talk a little bit more about Jordan, just finish that, and then go on with the rest of your career.

LINDER: Okay.

Q: Okay, this is the twelfth of December 1996, the second session of Foreign Affairs Oral History Interview with Perry Linder, and we've been talking, Perry, about your assignment as Administrative Officer in Amman. You have something further to say about that assignment which ended, I believe, in the summer of 1976.

LINDER: Well, I'll just remark that Amman was my last hands-on administrative assignment. After that I became more of a manager, and more remote from many of the details that one gets involved in administration. When I arrived in Amman there was no security officer, so I did the security work, I did the personnel work, I did the admin work. Neither USIA nor AID had an executive officer, so I was intimately involved in what they

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did. I directly managed all of the visits in Jordan, including the Presidential visit. I managed the visits from the ground up, and on the spot, and in control of the whole thing while they were going on by radio. All of that made it a different kind of job, and there was a lot of satisfaction in it for me. I was promoted in my last year in Amman to FSO-3, that was the threshold level in the old system.

Q: What was the caliber overall of the Foreign Service Nationals that worked with you?

LINDER: I would have to say mixed. We had some good technical/crafts people, who could fix and repair most everything. We had inherited a couple of senior AID employees who were quite good. We had an East Bank Arab who was the head GSO, and he was weak. You know, the lesser folks were very reliable, dependable, good people, very willing workers. I came away from there with a very favorable impression of the Arabs. The Arabs I knew in Jordan, very hospitable, loyal people, entertaining, humorous.

Q: But some years later a very large compound building complex was built for the American embassy in Amman. Was that needed in the time you were there, or did that only arise as the mission expanded rapidly in later years?

LINDER: When I was there, we were looking for a new residence for the ambassador. The ambassadorial residence was on a compound which included the motor pool and some other things. It was being increasingly encroached upon by the city itself. It was a nice house in a fenced area that was being overrun by commercial business and so forth. I made quite an effort, my first real struggle with FBO, going through all the hoops that they demand in order to obtain and acquire or sell property. We did a lot of looking and made presentations, and we developed a proposal to sell the property and buy a new one.

In terms of the Chancery itself, I think I mentioned earlier that it was an apartment building that we had converted into a small fortress, three levels, with a basement, right across the street from the Intercontinental Hotel, which was a very good location. But the embassy was expanding, and we did need more space, but probably the most important thing was

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the security. We were right on the street. There couldn't have been more than fifteen or twenty feet. between the front door and the street. We were, in effect, right on the street. I know that there was a security effort to move the chancery. I know they brought property, I know where they bought and built, but I have never seen the new compound.

Q: I think we've talked perhaps about this before in the context of Amman, but security was a major concern not only worldwide coming out of Washington, but in terms of the particular post.

LINDER: It was, particularly in Amman, always a concern. Although we never had a serious incident while I was there. I mentioned there was an Army major shot at his door before I got there, and problems with Syria, but there was no real security incident while I was there. I also should say that this was the period when security was beginning to come to the forefront of concern in the State Department, and a lot of money was given to security. That was nice for the embassy, because in a sense the money was fungible. It was not supposed to be fungible, but it was passed on to the embassy, and little regard was given as to how it was spent. I mean, it had to be spent properly, and with all the documentation, but a lot of that money leaked over into projects, FBO projects, other projects, that were not necessarily security associated.

Q: Probably had a security aspect or dimension,...

LINDER: You'd try to make it so, but it was nice to have that money there and available. We had a security officer, who arrived after I got there, a very good security officer. But security had not yet set up a system to track their own money. It was money that came to the post in an allotment, it was handled by the Budget and Fiscal Officer as a separate allotment, but it was common practice to use that money for lots of things. As we continue with this interview and go on to other posts and later times, you'll see how that changed, and how DS got and kept better control over that money, and how it enhanced the role of security within the Department of State, and at overseas posts.

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Q: Okay, is there anything else we should say about Amman before we move on?

LINDER: No, I think that pretty well wraps it up.

Q: I see that after Jordan you went to a year of university training. Where was that, and what did you study?

LINDER: I returned to Washington in '76. I was assigned to university training, I knew that when I left Amman. I went to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, which is here in Washington at Ft. McNair. That was the year that they combined ICA and the War College into the National Defense University.

Q: But still, two separate courses.

LINDER: They were two separate schools, but you could take courses in the other school, and so forth. There was one chief, and it was called the National Defense University.

Q: Before that it had been, they had both...

LINDER: Two separate organizations, yes...

Q: Both at Ft. McNair.

LINDER: Both at Ft. McNair; they each had their own Commandant. It was not just the two, there was the Inter-American Defense College as well.

Q: Inter-American Defense College, or something like that.

LINDER: Yes, that sounds right, Inter-American Defense College, yes. That's also important, and I think that was part and parcel of the National Defense University.

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Q: So you had a year doing that, and then I think that's been pretty well covered in various interviews; is there anything from your point of view that you'd particularly want to say about that year?

LINDER: No, no, it was an interesting year, but I don't think either I or the Service got a lot out of that. Being my first year back in Washington after having been away for an extended period of time, my mind was more focused on getting settled, and smoothing this transition for your kids and wife and family and housing, and all of that. I enjoyed it, and met some nice people and made some good friendships, but I don't think I really got a lot out of it.

Q: ...out of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and what was your next assignment, was that here in Washington, or did you go back overseas?

LINDER: That was here in Washington; I went into the Inspection Corps, as it was then called, as an administrative inspector, had two years there. While there I inspected a number of large posts: I inspected London, Paris, Tel Aviv, Manila, and some smaller ones: Bermuda, Dublin, Malta; a very interesting assignment, and one that both added to my administrative background and knowledge and self confidence. I had the opportunity to be involved in the inspections of people well regarded in the Foreign Service, officers you'd heard of, and looked up to. As an inspector you had an opportunity to see exactly what they were doing and how they did it. I found that interesting and helpful. When you came right down to it, they weren't doing it much different than you would do it yourself, and in those terms, it was confidence building as well.

Q: I've never been an inspector myself, but I imagine it does exactly what you said in terms of your own confidence in your ability to do what you're doing, because you see what others are doing. But it also probably gives you a good basis of comparison between those who are doing it right, doing it well, are effective, and those that are not. And that, obviously, is a lesson too for you and for others.

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LINDER: Yes, all of that's true. I inspected large posts, the caliber of people there tended to be superior, and for the most part they performed well.

Q: So it was the exceptions that were where they needed some help or....

LINDER: Yes, the satisfaction from the inspections was mixed. It was a learning process for me, but some of the inspections didn't provide a lot of satisfaction; often you had to struggle to find something to say, or try to do something to end up with a product that was worthwhile, and there really wasn't all of that much to work with. If things were running well you didn't have any helpful recommendations. In a sense you felt you were just a nuisance to the post. There were those kind of inspections. There were other inspections where you felt you really did do some helpful things, and that was good.

Q: This was before the, I forget what the legislation was called, but it had the independent inspector general...

LINDER: Yes, that's right...

Q: ...that brought in outsiders.

LINDER: This was when it was run by the Foreign Service, so it was completely an in-house operation. You just had the inspectors, and we had what we called "Audit Qualified Inspectors" at that time, mostly people who had come over from GAO and worked along with the regular inspectors, but did more detailed work.

Q: I guess the debate in part is between in-house that leads to a whitewash that you could never want to rock the boat or criticize peers and colleagues on the one hand; on the other, if you have a completely independent watchdog heavily audit oriented group that goes in determined, required, constrained to find something wrong, whether there's anything wrong or not, seems me, is that a fair contrast between two points of view?

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LINDER: No, I don't think so, that's not the way it's supposed to work. If you have an independent inspector general, which we now have, you report to Congress. I don't think they're constrained to find something wrong. As a matter of fact, I am working for the OIG right now, and it is much different than it was when I was there before. I think the independent view is a good thing. I think the independent inspector is in a better position to make needed criticism than was the case in the old system. I was in Athens when they changed the system and they brought in the new Inspector General—Funk, was the first Inspector General under the new system. I didn't like the way it was presented and developed. Looking at it from a distance, it appeared to me to have that there was a “I gotcha” attitude, and look how much money we can save, and we know there's a lot of fraud and mismanagement and poorly-used funds out there. I thought the initial reports that the OIG put out were very self-serving, and counted a lot of savings that weren't actual savings. You could say we eliminated six positions and therefore saved a million and a half dollars, but you know that wasn't true, because those people were someplace else. I mean, it wasn't a real savings. We don't have much program money in the Department of State, so I don't think there's much scope for serious irregularities. You're not going to find that we're mispending huge amounts of money. They never have found that. But all in all, I would say it was a good change to go to an outside Inspector General.

Q: Let me ask one other sort of general question about the inspection process. And I think this probably relates both to the old way and the current way. Before you go on a field inspection of an overseas post you talk to lots of people in Washington, in different agencies, in different bureaus in the State Department. How much do you really go with preconceived ideas or a pretty good notion of what you're going to find right or wrong, or to what extent are you really surprised when you get to the field, either positively or negatively?

LINDER: You're not supposed to go to the field with preconceived notions, but of course, you do get a sense of what's out there, a strong sense of what's out there. But that's not

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to say there aren't surprises at post. You can't cover it all from back here; often things look much different when you get out there, and an attitude or a notion that you had when you left here you find is not correct. It's quite surprising, really, because you'd think the desk officers, and Country Directors and your post management officers back here in Washington would be well clued in to all the things that are going on at post, but that's not necessarily true. That's because certain posts are more vital at a particular point in time and more emphasis is put on them than other posts; the Bureau has a lot of posts to manage and look after, and some of them don't get a lot of attention.

Q: And you have the old continuity problem with people serving only two years or so in a particular job, that the learning curve sometimes takes most of the time that they're there, and they're spending part of their time thinking about their onward assignment.

LINDER: That's another factor.

Q: How about length of inspections? Did you generally feel that they were adequate, too long, too short, the time that you actually spent at the post.

LINDER: Well, that was mixed, because I did many large posts, we spent a long time at these posts. Probably too much time. You don't need too much time at a post. After awhile, time becomes counterproductive. You need enough time to talk to everybody, look at it, and then write it down.

Q: How about the personnel evaluation aspect? I think inspectors now do not do an evaluation of each Foreign Service person at post, but I think they used to do that.

LINDER: When I was in OIG, we did junior officers. We did junior officers and I think Chiefs of Mission, and that would apply to the Consul General, the principal officers, and Chiefs of Mission. I think that's the way it was. You could do a report on anybody, if there was a reason to do a report, you could do it. But the requirement at the time that I was in the Inspection Corps was just untenured junior officers, and principal officers.

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Q: Because you had been in the personnel evaluation office before, in the past. I just wondered if you thought it was better for inspectors to do more of these, or is it really difficult in the relatively short time they're at a post, to do a valid evaluation.

LINDER: It would be unreasonable to ask the inspectors to do an evaluation on everybody. Inspectors' evaluations in the performance file were very helpful to the Boards, I know that, and when it was limited, let's say, to the principal officer and the untenured junior officers, the inspectors are able to do a pretty good job. For untenured officers there wasn't that much, you could talk to them, you could talk to their supervisors, and you got a sense of their work, and I think you could make a useful addition. And principal officers the same way. You looked at the whole post, and you could do an adequate evaluation of the principal officer. Just as a side remark, now the OIG is insisting that there be a clear correlation between the evaluation done on the principal officer and the evaluation on the post. In other words, if there are criticisms on post operations, that has to be reflected in the principal officer report, which seems to me to be right. I mean, after all, he is responsible for everything that goes on there. And obviously, because the OIG has to make this point, it's not something that has been universally applied.

Q: But the inspectors do not evaluate the DCM or other senior...

LINDER: I don't think so, but I'm not certain of that, I think it's just the principal officer.

Q: Well, in the period we're talking about, you were an inspector Perry, from I guess about the summer of '77 to the summer of '79.

LINDER: Right.

Q: Anything else to say about that assignment?

LINDER: No. I also did a couple of inspections in the department, did NEA, and that was at the time of the Iranian hostage situation, or just after it was over.

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Q: Hostages in...

LINDER: Iran.

Q: Tehran.

LINDER: Yes. That was interesting. The assignment to OIG was a lot more useful and instructive than my year at Ft. McNair. It was a very useful experience. That and my work in the office of performance evaluation were the two jobs in the Department of State that helped me most.

Q: Especially in your overseas assignments.

LINDER: In my overseas assignments, yes.

Q: I guess when you mentioned the hostages in Tehran, I think the embassy was not actually taken over until November, approximately, of 1979, so that would have been after you left the Inspection Corps. You were in the Department, I think, on your next assignment.

LINDER: Didn't I leave the Inspection Corps in '80? I don't know...'79...I know...it was late '79, okay.

Q: But there were other things going on, obviously.

LINDER: Okay, it could be that when we inspected NEA that the hostage task force was in place.

Q: And there were some things going on in Tehran, because the Shah had already left, and there was obviously tension, and what happened in November was not totally a surprise.

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LINDER: The hostages were taken when?

Q: I think in November of '79.

LINDER: '79, yes.

Q: Because I think in accord with your little sheet here, you went to be Executive Director in OES in the summer of '79.

LINDER: Oh, Okay.

Q: Tell me about that assignment. Tell us a little bit about that bureau and what the job consisted of, and who was the boss at that time.

LINDER: That was an interesting job. Tom Pickering, who had been ambassador in Jordan, was appointed as Assistant Secretary of OES, and he asked me if I would work there with him as the Executive Director, which I was happy to do. It's a bureau that's much different than the regional bureaus. Not a typical State Department bureau. A good part of the bureau was made up of non-Foreign Service officers, a lot of people you brought in—academics and people from other agencies, people that were knowledgeable in specific, often scientific fields. You had the whole fishery section, the oceans, and all the negotiations that went on over fish stocks, and who could fish what, and all of that.

Q: Whales.

LINDER: Whales. You had the environmental section, you had the nuclear business...

Q: Population, I think...

LINDER: Yes, population was taken on. When I went in there population wasn't part of it, but we absorbed that, or it had been absorbed just about the time I started. Dick Benedick, I believe, headed population at that time. So we had all of those very diverse elements

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within the organization, and we had close relations with the Department of Energy, HEW, NOAA,...

Q: *EPA...*

LINDER: ...Coast Guard, EPA, all of those. It was at a time, also, when we brought in a lot of these people as FSR's; they were brought in, many of them, from other agencies; they came in and were given an FSR appointment, and...

Q: *Foreign Service Reserve.*

LINDER: That's right.

Q: *Reserve, or Restricted?*

LINDER: Restricted, I think, FSR, yes. The appointments were limited to five-years. While I was in there, the five years was up on a lot of these people, and there was a feeling that the front office wanted to get rid of some of them. That was a big struggle. While we made the attempt and started the process, they soon went into grievances and on and on and on, and I don't think they were ever successful in putting those people out. If people weren't willing to go, and their five years were up, they seemed to have tenure, and you couldn't get rid of them.

Q: *I know that for all of the functional bureaus, certainly including OES, even with a very strong, energetic, well-regarded Assistant Secretary like Tom Pickering, and an Executive Director like you, it's hard to persuade Foreign Service that it's in their career interest to come into a bureau like that, because the work is specialized, and somewhat narrow, as seen by the Foreign Service, and it doesn't sort of easily lend itself to onward assignments, as for example, a desk officer in a regional bureau does. How did you...was that a problem for the bureau in your time?*

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LINDER: Yes, it was a problem, I'm sure it still is a problem. It was ameliorated somewhat while I was there because Pickering was there, and he attracted good people, people liked to work for him, and so that helped. But it was always a struggle to bring people in. People that came in, Foreign Service people that were generalists that came to work there for the most part seemed to like it. It certainly was interesting work, and they probably had more freedom of action than they would have had in a regional bureau. They were dealing with a more discrete subject, and they had a lot of outside contacts, and an interesting job, and one that provided them with a lot of satisfaction. There were some FSO's that got into the attach# program...we had the scientific attach# program. Most of the senior attach#s were brought in from academia or elsewhere, but we still had some assistant attach#s, scientific attach#s, and they tended to be FSO's. They came in and out. But it was a problem. I recall as Executive Director going over the PAR's of people and finding out how many had some kind of scientific background, identify them and encourage them, and...

Q: Of course, the other thing that I sensed over the years, perhaps not accurately, is that some of the people that we've brought in from universities, scientists, or people who had a strong technical background and came in to serve as scientific attach#s or in the bureau of oceans, environment, and science; so that is a way to move into other dimensions of the Foreign Service, to be Deputy Chief of Mission, or Political Officer, or to move up to be Ambassador, and a few of those people have been able to do that.

LINDER: Yes, there were several. Morris Busby had been assigned to OES while he was in the Navy, and then he retired from the Navy; he was a young man; he stayed on, got an FSR appointment, and it was interesting, because he had never been Foreign Service. I mean, his only work in the Department of State had been there in OES, and he was a very effective, dynamic sort of person, and he became head of an office within OES. But he couldn't move up, with no Foreign Service background, and in his rank at that time, I don't know, maybe FSO-2 or -3. But he got the job as DCM in Mexico, and that was a difficult

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job...I forget who was there as the ambassador—Gavin, or someone who had gotten rid of his last two DCMs, and it was not a popular, career-enhancing job.

Q: But a big job.

LINDER: ...but a big job. And they picked Busby for it, and he did very very well, and he went on from there and made a nice name for himself in the Foreign Service, and deservedly so. And there was another fellow, I can't think of his name, a Black from Harvard, who was brought in. I remember I was there when he was recruited and brought him in. He had a Ph.D., and went into the nuclear policy field. And I know he went on to become a DCM, and again, made a nice career in the Foreign Service. There were also Foreign Service officers who came in there and liked it, and left the Foreign Service for a civil service position and stayed in OES because they found the subject matter there attractive and interesting.

Q: One of the things about the subject matter is it's very tangible, you're dealing with very real issues that have domestic impact, that obviously have a foreign relations international impact, whether it's fish or dealing with nuclear waste, or nuclear energy in some way, or any of these subjects, population, and I think it's very satisfying in that respect, too, whereas a desk officer or somebody in a geographic bureau is trying to work with more ephemeral work, to improve relations, or solve problems that are not solvable.

LINDER: As Administrative officer, I appreciate that distinction, because that's the way I've always felt about my job—at least there was something tangible there, and I don't think I would ever get the same satisfaction out of a policy job, and never see from one day to the next what you've really accomplished.

Q: Against everything you've said so far about OES, how were you perceived by the rest of the department. Not you personally, but you as a bureau. And when you would go to

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meetings of other Executive Directors, and so on, was OES well regarded, or were you seen as kind of a child that they weren't sure how it fit into the rest of the family?

LINDER: I think we were as well regarded as any functional bureau, probably better than most. But we didn't compare with a regional bureau. I mean, the regional bureau is the real heart of the Foreign Service and the real jobs are in there, and that's true for Executive Directors as well as Assistant Secretaries of State and everybody else. But Pickering gave that bureau a high profile. His voice was important in the Department in a lot of ways. OES got involved, had a voice that they didn't always have. And so he enhanced that bureau considerably. And we had strong people in there.

Q: All of this was happening toward the end, I believe, of the Carter administration, which was interested in a lot of these issues.

LINDER: Yes, that's true, too.

Q: So Pickering presumably had at least a reasonable degree of access to the Secretary of State.

LINDER: With the Under Secretary. I think it was an Under Secretary that was charged with OES.

Q: At least part of the time, I think that was Matthew Nimitz; I don't know if you remember his name.

LINDER: I don't recall. I was there during the transition to the new administration.

Q: The Reagan administration.

LINDER: Right. That was a big change. It became politicized at that point. One of the issues at the time was seabed mining.

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Q: Law of the Sea?

LINDER: The whole Law of the Sea thing, and we backed out of that at the last minute. The Reagan administration and the Republicans had a definite view about that, and industry was involved as well, so that was a big motivation for a lot of the politicizing of OES.

Q: Now, was Tom Pickering there during that transition, or had he already left?

LINDER: It seems to me he left right before. He wasn't there to turn it over. I know he left, and new people came in.

Q: Now, you left...

LINDER: Shortly thereafter.

Q: After the administration changed.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: But you were not there with the new Assistant Secretary?

LINDER: Yes, I was there. I was there until my two-year assignment was up.

Q: In '81.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: Did that make much of an impact on you, and what you had to do? Were there a lot of requirements levied on you?

LINDER: Yes, a lot of my attention at that point was focused on bringing new people in. I mean, they wanted people brought into OES, and you had to get the White House

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clearance. I spent a lot of time talking to personnel over in the White House, and GS personnel, and security clearances. That was really the big effort, to get these new people on board.

Q: These were people with political background...

LINDER: That's right.

Q: Coming from outside...

LINDER: Coming from outside...

Q: Not Foreign Service people.

LINDER: That's right, people coming from outside. So all the emphasis was on that. And you know, it was obvious that there were going to be big changes; I mean changes in policy direction and character of the management of the bureau, and the whole thing. So I was happy to leave, but it was interesting to be there during the transition.

Q: Was another requirement that certain people had to move on to get them out of the bureau to get them out of the policy positions, or....

LINDER: Yes. I don't remember specific examples, but that was part and parcel of it. I mean, there were people who knew they were going to have to go once....

Q: Who were identified with a Carter administration policy.

LINDER: Exactly. Or they were in a position that you knew that they wanted to put their own in.

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Q: Did a transition person come into the bureau, or did you have to kind of relate to somebody as part of a transition team during the interim period before the new administration took office?

LINDER: As I recall, early on they did. It had been decided who would be assistant secretary and who his deputy would be, and his deputy got in there right off the bat. The confirmation process and so forth took awhile before the assistant secretary was there, but the deputy and I think a couple other people were in there very early. I don't remember that I had anything to do directly with the transition team. There usually is a transition team that comes into the State Department. The deputy was identified very early, and he was involved as soon as possible.

Q: Well, it was certainly a difficult transition for career people in many ways, because it was such an abrupt change in terms of certain policies and priorities. I was in the European Bureau at the time, and involved a bit with Canada, and one of the major issues was acid rain, and it was a rather dramatic shift in our attitude and position there. I had to go up and testify before a House committee, and it was pretty tricky to say what our position was and how it had changed.

LINDER: Right.

Q: Because there wasn't anybody else more senior who was in any better position to do it at that early stage, and I'm sure that happened in many of the areas that OES was interested in.

LINDER: Yes there were big policy changes.

While I was in OES, I was on the Great Lakes Sea Lamprey Eradication audit. The sea lamprey program had been going on for 25 years, and the audit was a joint project with Canada and the U.S. The program's headquarters is in Lansing, Michigan. The lampreycide came from Bayer in Germany, the chemical company. It would be dumped

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into the streams, to kill the sea lamprey, and those streams emptied into the Great Lakes. I guess it wasn't larva, but at least it was the lamprey at a very early state. And they had been successful in decreasing the number of sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, and reviving the fish stock. This had been going on for 25 years, and they decided that there should be an audit, and they set up a joint commission to do the audit, and I was on the commission. It lasted about a year, and during that year, six times I went out to the Great Lakes and went to the office, and to the experimental places that they had, and up to Sault St. Marie on the Canadian side, and went out with the teams and watched them deploy the lampreycide. It was all a fascinating experience. Nobody could ever decide whether there was going to be any long lasting or side effects from this stuff that they'd been dumping into the lakes for all these years.

Q: But the purpose of your audit was to check on the finances and whether the funds had been properly spent.

LINDER: Right. We went up to Ottawa and produced the final product, an audit report and management study. Eventually, the Canadian who was the head of that audit became the head of the Sea Lamprey Program.

Q: And I guess sea lamprey who are supposed to be in the sea, in the ocean, somehow got up in the lakes...

LINDER: Yes, they migrated some way; I don't think they were ever sure, perhaps it occurred when they opened the Saint Lawrence Seaway, I don't know. But they found them all the way up in the finger lakes in New York, and...I can remember back in the '50s reading about it in Time Magazine. You'd see this ugly picture of a trout or other fish with one or two of these sea lamprey hanging onto them and sucking the vitals out of them. Anyway, it was an interesting experience.

Q: Well, you never know quite what you're going to get involved in a particular assignment.

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LINDER: That's right.

Q: There are a lot of surprises. So you were in OES as Executive Director. You had a large staff, small staff in your executive office?

LINDER: It was a GS staff.

Q: You were the only Foreign Service.

LINDER: I was the only Foreign Service officer. I would say we had about six people in there: a Budget/Fiscal Officer, a deputy who had been there for a long time and who was involved in a number of the commissions that had been set up to manage fish stocks and that sort of thing...

Q: Was your predecessor also a Foreign Service officer?

LINDER: Yes, Frank Reddy was my predecessor. He had worked for Patsy Mink, then OES Assistant Secretary.

Q: So the feeling was that it was good to have a Foreign Service who could come in fresh every few years, also could connect with other parts of the Department...

LINDER: Yes, that was the thinking. But my predecessor was Foreign Service. I don't know who his predecessor was. The person who succeeded me came from the outside, but has remained in the Department of State and eventually became Executive Director of CA.

Q: Senior Executive Service, probably.

LINDER: Right.

Q: Anything else about this assignment in Washington and OES?

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LINDER: No, I can't think of anything else.

Q: Okay. In the summer of '81 you moved to another job in Washington—what was that?

LINDER: Yes, I became Executive Director of the Foreign Service Institute.

Q: Another functional bureau.

LINDER: Yes, and quite different from other bureaus in the Department.

Q: In '81, where was FSI?

LINDER: It was in Rosslyn, in three buildings. It had been in that location since we gave up the old garage in Arlington Towers.

Q: Who was the Director of FSI when you were starting?

LINDER: Paul Boeker was there when I arrived, and Steve Low when I left.

Q: I have to ask you right at the outset; we're now conducting this interview at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center at Arlington Hall, was this location, this beautiful facility under discussion when you were Executive Director, or did that come later?

LINDER: No, it started when Steve Low became Director of FSI. Steve Low, to my mind, is the father of this nice arrangement, this beautiful achievement for the Foreign Service. He came in and he said it was something we should do, and this particular site had been condemned in the past, I can't recall that it this location was his idea. It seems to me that it had been considered before. In any case, when he became Director. He said we're going to do something, we're going to get the Foreign Service Training Center, something of our own, get out of Rosslyn. Rosslyn is not an adequate set up, we can't run an operation in all these high-rise buildings, spread out all over. We came out and looked at this site.

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Q: While you were...

LINDER: While I was Executive Director. We developed background information on the site, it seemed feasible, we looked at it, we knew who owned it, we knew that the military was going to leave it. An important question was, how you deal with Arlington County.

Steve got involved with all of that, talked to people up on the Hill, and in Arlington County. My particular project at that point was to have a study done; I did a contract with a firm located there in Rosslyn to produce a brochure which would describe what it is that FSI did, and what sort of facility such an organization should have, and would highlight the inadequacies of the present situation and the desirability of having an institute similar to FSTS.

Q: What were some of the main inadequacies? You've mentioned; the high-rise buildings, three different buildings, obviously the rent that had to be paid. Were there others, too?

LINDER: Security was becoming more and more of an issue. The need to control people, and how to do that in these buildings and how to move people up and down into classes and get things done in the time that we had to do it. The inadequacies were mostly physical. The fact that FSI was spread around those buildings that weren't designed for classrooms.

Q: It's interesting that already in the early '80s you were visiting the Arlington Hall site, which was then, as you said...

LINDER: An Army base at that time.

Q: Military Army base. With facilities that were clearly inadequate for a Foreign Service Institute, there was no way you could move here and use their facilities, which were for a different purpose, very old, rundown and so on.

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LINDER: Right.

Q: So then if you were going to come here, you had to build, somebody had to build something new, and that indeed has happened. But an alternative route that could have been taken would have been to move somewhere else into government facilities, maybe in the District of Columbia, or Buzzard Point, or...were there other ideas or options?

LINDER: Yes, there was an alternate site on or near Maine Avenue in DC They were going to build an international center down there, and FSI could be part of that, or would occupy space in that area. We looked at that. There were some interests pushing that; I don't think that ever came into being; there is no international center there now. Perhaps the idea was redirected to the new Reagan Building.

Q: Well, there is a building just being completed called the Ronald Reagan Federal Office Building, which is kind of opposite the Department of Commerce on 14th Street; it's the old Federal...next to Federal Triangle, and it's a big, big building.

LINDER: Yes.

Q: I think it's going to be occupied in part by AID and some other agencies with international aspects; I don't know whether that was ever talked about for FSI.

LINDER: The Reagan building wasn't mentioned at that time.

Q: One of the objections I can remember about Arlington Hall was that it would be difficult access from the public transportation, it would not have the public facilities close by, as one did in Rosslyn, restaurants and so on. It would be somewhat more removed from the State Department.

LINDER: That's right.

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Q: All of those things were thought about.

LINDER: Yes, those things were all thought about, and they had to be overcome. I mean, the distance from the State Department was one of the issues, the other problem, as I recall, was there was no Metro stop, really, within walking distance of the new campus, and that was a problem. Those strike me as the two biggest, transportation and access issues.

Q: But at the time you were there, from '81 to '84, all of this was well in the future, and you were sort of beginning...

LINDER: It was just the beginning phase. As I say, when Steve came in, I mean, that was really the beginning. He came in with that idea in mind, and he really put it into being, accomplished something. He deserves a lot of credit for that. Because when I came into the Foreign Service in 1956, people were talking about having a real campus of our own, an institution like, I mean, something like the Naval Academy or West Point. Of course, that has never come into being, and probably shouldn't be, in my own mind, but I mean, there was always talk of establishing an important facility. But you know, I think this has worked out very nicely, and you know, I think it will continue to grow and create tradition as the years go by, and it'll become more than just a training institute or a training facility, it'll become a centerpiece of our Foreign Service.

Q: Well, it's certainly something that we all can be very proud of, and from what little I can observe, students seem to be enjoying it, and I think staff enjoy working here.

LINDER: Yes, I don't hear any complaints about it from anybody.

Q: We should probably talk about some of the other problems that you had to deal with as Executive Director of FSI and the period that you were here. What were some of the main issues, problems that you were...

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LINDER: An important issue at this time was an attempt to take the Executive Directorship out of FSI and put it into the DG's office.

Q: The Director General's office.

LINDER: Yes. In other words, personnel would expand their executive directorate and FSI would become a subsidiary, a division under DG/P. Anyway, we fought hard to stamp that one out, and I think rightly so. FSI is quite different. It is a sizeable operation; I don't think DG/P could have managed it as well and there are good reasons for keeping it independent of DG/P.

Q: Okay, This is tape number three of a foreign affairs oral history interview with Perry Linder, being conducted at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training. Interviewer is Raymond Ewing.

Perry, we're just talking about your time as Executive Director of the Foreign Service Institute. I think you were just talking a little bit about why the Foreign Service Institute is a separate entity like a bureau, but why some people have thought over the years that it should be part of the Personnel Bureau, coming under the Director General, or in some way more closely integrated into the State Department. What was your experience when you were here?

LINDER: The Director of FSI reported to M, is that the way it is now?

Q: Well, that's the way it's been, I don't know exactly how it is now. I think when you were here that's the way it was.

LINDER: That's the way it was. But the DG is not an office to be ignored. DG/P is responsible for Foreign and Civil Service training assignments, training of State Department people, so they certainly had an interest in what we did, and in a sense FSI was performing one of their functions. But as I said earlier, FSI is unique. FSI doesn't just

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serve the Department of State, they serve many other agencies of government; they have an income, unlike any other bureau, that provide a service, and that service is costed and the agencies pay tuition. FSI has to compete with others for the services they offer, there's Berlitz out there, and other organizations that offer language training, there are universities which have not only language training courses, but area studies programs and professional studies programs. FSI has to compete with others, both in terms of the quality of what they offer and the price they offer it at.

Within FSI, you have a big audio-visual unit, you have your TV studio where we do productions, we have our language tapes, a language laboratory, and those tapes are sold commercially; we produce them and they're sold. We had a library. There were many things that were different about FSI. These differences made sound reasons for FSI to retain its executive directorate. It would have been very difficult, very impractical to try to run FSI out of another bureau, or to make it a subsidiary to the Director General or to the Office of Personnel.

Q: It's more than just a training division of the State Department Bureau of Personnel.

LINDER: That's right, it's a facility that serves others.

Q: So I suppose as the Executive Director one of our responsibilities was to liaise and coordinate with some extent with other agencies, at least about the framework under which their employees came as students in the various FSI training courses.

LINDER: That's true. We worked with the other agencies, particularly CIA, we've trained a lot of their people, the military, DIA, USIS. USIS trained people at FSI, but they also used outside commercial language classes.

Q: Could we talk about that a little bit? As a former dean of the School of Language Studies, that always bothered me that USIA, U.S. Information Agency, would send people for language training to commercial facilities. I could understand why they did it, they did

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it because it was cheaper, to save money. The down side though, from our point of view, and I think from their point of view, was that the kind of training that they got at Dupont Circle schools was just not as good or as relevant to foreign service work in embassies abroad as could be done at FSI. And I always thought it was very unfortunate they did that, and I had many conversations with my colleague at USIA about it, to no particular effect, but I think part of the problem may have been that we were charging, as you said, charging tuition, trying to cover costs, and they always argued that our costing was a little bit on the high side and it wasn't really fair that we charge them when we weren't charging State Department, so the Bureau of Personnel didn't have to budget for training, that was just absorbed out of the FSI budget. Is that an issue that sounds familiar from your time there?

LINDER: Yes, that's an issue that sounds familiar, and that's an issue that applies not only to FSI, but elsewhere within State Department.

Q: The whole administrative support system.

LINDER: That's right. However, in developing tuitions, we costed State Department at full cost, even though we didn't collect the money from the State Department. The cost was based on the participation of State Department people. So it wasn't unfair in that sense, we weren't putting the total burden on outsiders. FSI is paid for out of the State Department allotment, we do recover some cost but only a small percentage of the total.

Q: It's not full cost recovery.

LINDER: Right.

Q: But I think, I guess the basic point is that it was important for us to provide this training not just for State Department, but for the other foreign affairs agencies, for people serving abroad, and we took that seriously, I guess, is all I'm really asking you to confirm.

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LINDER: Of course we did, and we do it well. FSI provided pertinent language training, provided it well, and also provided an opportunity for people to develop skills in consort with people they're going to be working with abroad. That's also an important factor, you can build a very close relationship in those language classes.

Q: And I guess I need to have you talk a little bit about, well, we've talked about the building problem, the facility problem, Rosslyn's security, other agencies; how about within FSI itself? What were some of the issues that you had to deal with? And I guess I'd like to talk about one that is of interest to me, the integration not just of language training, but with area studies. Was that a subject that was active at the time you were here? Were language studies actually taking area studies?

LINDER: That was initiated while I was there, it occurred under Boeker, Paul Boeker. The person that was working for him and did that was Brian Atwood, who later became head of AID. He did the concept papers on that. Brian was a very forceful personality and he got that started. He made a lot of changes in professional training. At that time FSI also integrated language training and the area studies program.

Q: Was the mid-level course initiated when you were here? I believe that's a six-month course for awhile.

LINDER: Yes, that was initiated while I was there. We had to create space within the building to accommodate it. It was a six-month course. It required quite a change in facilities. Also something that started then, that was very good, and that may now have gone by the wayside, was an outreach facility, I forget what it was called.

Q: Oh, Center...

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LINDER: Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, or something like that. We'd bring in people from the outside, there would be symposia, and they'd publish books. I thought it was innovative and useful to FSI and the Department. I don't know where that stands now.

Q: No, that's been abolished.

LINDER: That is too bad; I thought that was a good initiative.

Q: Well, it was a good program, and as you say, it provided a forum to bring academics and experts in, and it led to some books and some interesting exchanges, but it also was useful for students to hear discussion...

LINDER: Particularly the symposia; they'd bring people in to discuss foreign service subjects, the students could participate as well as the staff, and it was very good.

Q: Another activity at the Foreign Service Institute, and I don't know if it started when you were there, is the Overseas Briefing Center, particularly for family members.

LINDER: That was underway when I was there. It was important, and expanding. We paid a lot of attention to it. Another aspect of FSI that we haven't mentioned was its overseas schools. We have the school in Yokohama, the school out in Taiwan, and the one formerly in Beirut.

Q: Tunis.

LINDER: Now in Tunis. That's another aspect of FSI, and it was also something the Executive Director had to deal with. We had separate budgets for those schools, and charged students from other agencies for attendance at those schools.

Q: I believe there were also, at least at some of the schools, language students from other countries. Do you remember?

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LINDER: That was another new initiative at the time I was there. FSI was in the process while I was there of signing an agreement with Micronesia, to train their diplomats. I think there were some students in the diplomatic services of other countries in our language school, although I'm not sure of that now.

Q: Well, when I was here, which was a little bit later than your time, we had them certainly in both Yokohama and Taipei; I'm not sure about Tunis. And they came from countries like, as I recall, Great Britain, Australia, maybe Canada. Not very many, and basically English speaking countries.

LINDER: But there was an initiative to do a contract with Micronesia or some place out there in the Pacific. I don't know whether that ever happened.

Q: Oh, it did. Yes, it happened...

LINDER: ...brought people in from...

Q: Yes, from I think it was Micronesia, and subsequently, FSI has been involved with training diplomats from some of the Eastern European countries...

LINDER: Is that right?

Q: ...after the end of the Cold War, where they had basically replaced their previous foreign service with new people, and also some of the, I believe, some of the countries of the former Soviet Union, too. So there's, I don't know whether that's still continuing now, but that certainly happened for awhile.

LINDER: And they'd bring people in here, train them here, or...

Q: Some I think was done in Washington, and some FSI people or people trained by FSI did it in their own country.

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LINDER: As far as I know, we'd never before done training for anybody outside the U.S. Government; it just got started then. I'm not sure about language training in the overseas schools. We could have had some other nationalities there.

Q: One of the things I suppose that the Executive Director had to do was to fill positions, recruit people, both Foreign Service people to fill certain jobs and bring people in from universities or from outside, as well. Was that a major part of your job, or a major headache, as you recall?

LINDER: No, no, it wasn't. There was always concern about getting the right people. We didn't have a lot of Foreign Service people in the Foreign Service Institute. The head of the departments were FSOs, and I don't recall that we had a lot of trouble filling those positions. There were always people interested in language or being a director of the area studies program. Those were also jobs that provided an opportunity for contacts outside the State Department. I don't recall that we had a problem filling those jobs. We had problems with the language instructors and the linguists, some of those people.

Q: What sort of problems, do you recall? Problems in filling positions, or...

LINDER: Well, more problems in changing things and...

Q: Resistance.

LINDER: Yes, the rigidity that was in there. Also, the language instructors were organized. They belonged to AFGE.

Q: The union.

LINDER: The union. I remember we used to have to meet with the union and we had problems with a number of the instructors, some were aliens, they didn't have U.S. residence status. They were really dependent upon FSI to remain in the U.S.

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Q: So you had to deal with the Immigration Service.

LINDER: Yes, we had to deal with INS. There were a lot of problems, but they were problems that you would expect in a big organization on the personnel side. They were different from the problems you run into in the regular State Department. They were not extraordinary, but they were issues that you had to deal with.

Q: There's a basic conflict, like there is in many large organizations, between the need, the desire to have some continuity, to reward long-term employees by some kind of a secure arrangement, to keep them here, on the one hand, and on the other, the need to have new blood, to take account of changing circumstances, where perhaps you don't need anybody to teach a particular language because you don't have any students. Is that a dilemma that you recall from your time here, trying to achieve a balance between these different considerations?

LINDER: Yes. Some instructors were permanent, and others were called in as needed. The as-needed status was best for FSI. I suppose it's similar to tenure in the university system. Those were instructors that you wished you could get rid of or move around.

Q: Who had tenure, or permanent status?

LINDER: You know, ideally you have everybody on call, and of course, there's an advantage in teaching a language to bring in new people. We can get a bit remote over time if we have language instructors that left their native country 30 years ago. We are better off bringing in new blood. But that was something FSI struggled with.

Q: Course, the disadvantage of that is that when you need people, you may not be able to find them, or they may have jobs somewhere else and might not be available, so it's a dilemma.

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LINDER: I guess we used to run some advertisements in the paper for different languages and different instructors. The linguists were pretty well connected within their profession, they were involved with the universities, and they had their friends here and there. I think they could usually get a line on an instructor; I don't remember ever having a big rush to find somebody that you absolutely needed, somebody to speak a particular language and instruct in that language and you couldn't find someone.

Q: Well, that's one of the wonderful things about the Washington area—there are people from everywhere, and of course, one of the...what you're looking for in a language instructor at the Foreign Service Institute is somebody who really knows the language, and is a native speaker of it, not somebody who has a Ph.D. to be a classroom instructor.

LINDER: Right. It's more important that they be a native speaker.

Q: And that person might be driving a taxicab, or whatever, but...

LINDER: I spent a lot of time as Executive Director, establishing the accounting and tuition determination module, or modules. The idea was that this would be an automated database system, that we would plug in all our costs and we would be able to use it to determine what the tuition should be in each class. It would also help us in our accounting, the whole package. And we worked hard on that. We had an outside contractor, and we eventually got a product. Like all of these things, it wasn't everything we expected, but it was useful, and I've been told that subsequently much of it was adopted by the department for broader applications. So I always felt good about that; that was something that we did work on, and we spent a lot of time on a forward step to automation and automated accounting and so forth.

Q: Did you have major problems getting adequate funding in the period that you were Executive Director at FSI? Was the budget issue always very tight, or was that something that you felt you had adequate resources?

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LINDER: I think we always had adequate resources. We paid attention to the budget. John Sprott, was the Deputy Director, always looked at it and kept a close eye on the budget and followed it carefully, he provided continuity, because he'd been at FSI for many years. Money was a concern, but I don't recall that we were ever desperate, or that we ever had to make serious cuts.

Q: Because that certainly happened in later years, I think, that it was tight, and difficult, and even they had to cut personnel back or cut out some classes or something.

LINDER: Yes. My time at FSI preceded government, and in particular State downsizing..

Q: How about junior officer training orientation—do you remember much about that in your period there, where a lot of new officers coming on board and do you remember any particular innovations that were done in...

LINDER: It seems to me that changes were made in the junior officer orientation as well. Exactly what those changes were I don't recall any longer. I know we ran active programs while I was there; it was not a period in which we cut back on intake, so I think we had full classes.

Q: And how about the Senior Seminar? That covered to the other end of the career.

LINDER: That was in place while I was there, and that was an interagency program; we had students from many agencies in the Senior Seminar. Jack Perry was running it while I was there.

Q: You worked for two directors at the Foreign Service Institute, both of whom had really very distinguished careers as Chief of Mission, Ambassador several times, had senior positions in Washington. Do you have any observations about that kind of person to lead FSI, somebody who had a lot of Foreign Service credentials, but perhaps not as many on

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kind of the academic side, or does the Paul Boeker/Steve Low model seem about right for you for that position?

LINDER: It seemed right to me, although I hadn't had any experience with their predecessors. It is the Foreign Service Institute, and while it was an interagency responsibility, that responsibility is focused on overseas service. People such as Steve Low and Paul Boeker are broad enough to manage it; I see nothing wrong, and a lot to recommend having an FSO rather than an academic as Director of FSI.

Q: As you say, the orientation is to preparation for overseas service, whether it's language training or area studies or professional development, although there is some training done for civil service and Washington-based people.

LINDER: Yes, but that's a minor part. There are other institutions in Washington that do that sort of thing as well, so we're not unique in that sense. One other thing I ought to mention: the whole business of systems management and computer training. We were just beginning to send systems managers overseas, and we had just set up a systems training operation at FSI. And, the use of computers with FSI was fairly new. We'd just set up a central computer when I came in. So that was a whole field that was expanding day by day, and one that involved a lot of my time, in trying creating better facilities for training systems managers, for training secretarial people, everybody needed that training...

Q: Word processing.

LINDER: Word processing; that whole field was very much in development and expansion during the time I was there. That was an interesting aspect of the job as well.

Q: Did you do any teaching yourself when you were here at FSI?

LINDER: No, I didn't. I've talked to classes, participated on panels. I did that when I had other jobs in the Department. But no, I never actually taught a class.

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Q: Did you feel that the training of systems managers was pretty well established while you were here, or did you basically just get it started and recognize that it still had a long way to go to having proper facilities?

LINDER: No, I think it was pretty well established. We were bringing in FSN's, as well, from overseas, at that point.

Q: To do training.

LINDER: To do training at FSI. We had a good person in the job. It was new, but I think it was serving its purpose, and it was expanding; we knew we had to train more people.

Q: Okay, anything else we should talk about in connection with the Foreign Service Institute?

LINDER: No, I can't think of anything.

Q: So after what, about...

LINDER: ...three years.

Q: ...three years there and a total of about seven years in Washington?

LINDER: I was in Washington eight years.

Q: Eight years, Okay.

LINDER: I might just remark that this was a great thing for my family. I mean, my kids had been in French schools for two posts, and they had a major transition in Jordan to an English-speaking school, but they'd never lived in the States, and so, it wasn't an easy transition for them. My son, I think at the time must have been about 11-12 years old.

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Q: When you came back.

LINDER: When I came back. My daughter, six, and I had a older daughter who was 14, going into high school. And it wasn't an easy transition for them. My wife, foreign born, had only lived in the States for a couple of years back in the '60s, so we had to reestablish ourselves here. We'd bought a house when we were in Jordan. When we returned we moved into the neighborhood and the kids had a chance to get themselves settled, and the eight years was a great thing. I know now people can only stay five years, and they're fortunate if they can stay five, but from a family point of view, the additional years in Washington were very, very helpful.

Q: And so your youngest child was how old when you were due to go overseas again?

LINDER: When we went back overseas, our youngest child was just going into high school, my son was in college, and our oldest daughter was in graduate school.

Q: So really, for your family, it worked out exactly right.

LINDER: it worked out very, very well.

Q: Well, it's said in the Foreign Service that the most difficult transition, often, is the re-entry, when kids who have been in overseas posts come back to the United States and find, feel that they know very little about what's really going on.

LINDER: Not only do they know little about it, but they have unrealistic ideas about what it is, and who they are.

Q: So in 1984, after eight years in Washington, where did you go?

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LINDER: I went to Greece; went out there as the Administrative Officer, Administrative Counselor. It was a four-year assignment, and it was my first big overseas post. I'd been in Brussels, of course, but as Personnel Officer.

Q: And you'd been in Amman, but Amman was not nearly as large as it was later, at the time you were there.

LINDER: That's right, and I'm sure it's still not the size of Athens. Athens was a large post. Not only was it large in itself, but it had regional responsibilities and regional operations running out of there; regional security,...what else did we have?

Q: Was it budget and fiscal?

LINDER: No, we didn't have regional budget and fiscal, although while I was there we took over the budget and fiscal work for Nicosia and Bulgaria.

Q: And several agencies.

LINDER: Yes. We had a lot of agencies there. We had doctors, a nurse, and they had regional responsibilities.

Q: And a consulate in Thessaloniki.

LINDER: Yes, we had a consulate in Thessaloniki, right.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you went?

LINDER: Monty Stearns was there when I arrived, and about half way through my tour, Bob Keeley became Ambassador.

Q: So you had two Foreign Service career Heads of Mission.

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LINDER: That's right, both with previous experience and both language qualified people.

Q: And who were the DCMs?

LINDER: When I first got there, it was Alan Berlin and later Ed Cohen. I'd known Alan Berlin in Brussels, and when he worked in the Law of the Sea. The Law of the Sea at that time was separate from OES.

Q: It was negotiating that treaty?

LINDER: Yes, he was the Deputy in that office, and then he was the DCM in Athens. Alan was part of the reason that I went out there. The Administrative Officer who was out there came down with a fatal illness, a tumor, and had to be taken out, and the position became vacant while I was negotiating for an onward assignment. I had the opportunity to go to Argentina, but Athens looked better to me, so I ended up in Greece. Anyway, it was a fascinating post. For the whole four years, terrorism was a big, big issue. When I first got there, it was like an assassination every other night. It was the Israelis, the Mossad, the Palestinian organizations of various types, the Arabs were very active there, and they were shooting each other. I lived in an area in which there were several embassies and where many diplomats lived. In that area there were bombs and there were shootings, you would have this at night and in the morning, you'd read about it in the paper. And then we had November 17th...

Q: Which was a Greek organization.

LINDER: Which was a Greek organization, that I think, assassinated the Station Chief, I think it was in '74 or '75...

Q: '75. Christmas.

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LINDER: That was their first act against Americans. And subsequent to that, they assassinated others, including a military officer just before I got there. And also just before I got there, they'd shot at a military courier. While I was there, they blew up the defense attaché, and they set off bombs...one against a USAF bus moving air crew between the airport and a hotel. There were numerous incidents, so security was a very big issue while I was there.

Q: In the US Air Force, US military had a lot of people in Greece, but in the immediate Athens area, I assume you had to work pretty closely with the...

LINDER: We worked very closely with the USAF. The USAF base is adjacent to the Athens airport. It was part and parcel of the airport.

Q: The international airport.

LINDER: The international airport. The Navy had a base on the other side of the hill at Marathon. We also had an Army military support group; they worked like a MAAG. The head of MAAG, and the Base Commander or his deputy attended our weekly staff meetings. We had a large military presence in Brussels. I was in Madrid, where we had the base at Torrejon, right outside of Madrid, and of course, in Jordan there was a US military presence. But I've never seen daily involvement with military issues as we had in Greece. At every staff meeting we were involved with the military, with the base, with the labor union out at the base. The union politicized, very left wing, and they were always doing something—putting up a barricade or doing this or that, or having a disagreement over wages; there were always issues, and the embassy was involved on a daily basis in the minutiae.

Q: There was a political military officer, but you got very involved yourself.

LINDER: Well, I'm talking about the embassy in general. I was involved, yes, in various ways. I certainly was involved with their security people, and the community people—

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schools, and in many ways. But, I'm thinking more about the problems caused by the labor unions, the problems between the Greek government and the base. It was a constant concern.

Q: Besides security and the whole military presence in the Athens area, what were some of the other major issues that you had to deal with in your four years there—housing? You talked, I think, before, that you were more a manager in this assignment, less hands-on, so you had a pretty good staff.

LINDER: Yes, I had a large staff. I mean, I had a General Services Officer, and he had a couple deputies, three Americans in the General Services section, we had a couple personnel officers, a couple security officers, three when I left, a budget and fiscal section.

Q: The doctor.

LINDER: We had the doctor, and we had a lab there as well, and a nurse and lab technician, and we had the CLO; that was the first time I'd really been involved with the CLO.

Q: Communications, of course.

LINDER: Yes, a big communications operation. It was a large administrative staff, I didn't have to go out and rent houses, I wasn't involved in preparing the budget, I reviewed and approved it of course. I had the people that did the personnel work. I didn't have to do that sort of thing, it was different in that sense from earlier jobs.

Q: You mentioned the Community Liaison Officer, the CLO, and that that was the first time that you'd worked with such a position, because it was established, I guess, since your last overseas post. Tell me a little bit about how that worked and generally how the morale was in the American community, in the Embassy community.

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LINDER: Well, let's start with the CLO. I found the CLO was a marginally useful position. I mean, a lot depended on the person in it. It was useful to me as an Administrative Officer, as a liaison with the community, and let's say eyes and ears into the community. An Administrative Officer has to know what's going on and how people feel, and what they're worried about and what they think is wrong, and so forth. The CLO was a good source of that sort of information, if they were moved to do that and made an effort and were not themselves promoting a particular point of view.

Q: Which happens sometimes.

LINDER: Over and beyond that, they took on some of the chores that had to be done. In a big Embassy, you're going to have a weekly newsletter, they could do that, they provide a place where people could come in and talk, get information about the community, about the school.

Q: Very good with new arrivals.

LINDER: Yes, they were very helpful in orientation, getting it set up, organizing a welcome kit procedure. So in all of these things, they could be useful. But still, somewhat marginal. In Greece we had a large regional communications operation, with regional radio/telecommunications repair, big warehouses and workshops. So we had a lot of people that really weren't Foreign Service in the true sense. I mean, these were people who didn't prepare themselves for a career overseas, they were just interested in doing what they did, and they happened to be assigned overseas, and they probably would rather have been someplace in the US. And this seems to me becoming more and more true of people in all of our diplomatic establishments, at least the large ones. You have a large group of people who are different from those who had opted for a career in the Foreign Service and expected to be overseas, and one assumes takes pleasure in becoming involved in the local culture and what's happening, and learning the language, and taking advantage of

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all the things that are there. These other people really wanted it otherwise; they wanted it more like home.

Q: Their expectations are different, but their needs are different, too.

LINDER: They're different, too, yes; you can't ignore it, and it's a fact of life. So, an active CLO can be particularly helpful on that side of the fence.

Q: What was your experience with the selection of the Community Liaison Officer, the CLO; was that actively sought after, was there competition to get that position, or was it hard to find anybody to be recruited?

LINDER: It was never hard to find somebody; sometimes the choice was obvious and uncontested, and that was great. Other times, it was contested, and that was a problem. You had to deal with that; you didn't want to make enemies or create factions, so it could be a problem. It's a tricky business. In Athens I didn't have any particular problems; I did later in Madrid.

Q: You mentioned, I think, before, the school. Was that something you took quite a bit of interest in? You still had a child in school there.

LINDER: Yes, I had a child in high school. There was an American community school in Athens. I was involved to a degree on the Board, and an administrative office is involved in the schools. I always make it a point to go around to all the English-speaking schools and know what's there, as I do medical facilities. But I've always been very sensitive to medical needs, and I've always made it a point to visit the medical facilities, I've always considered it very important that the embassy have a doctor from the local community that it can rely on and talk with and call on.

Q: Perry, we're talking about Madrid, and I was asking a little bit about the Olympics and Barcelona, so why don't you talk about that a bit.

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LINDER: Well, from the moment of my arrival there in 1988, we knew that the Olympics were going to take place in Barcelona, and there would be some obligation on the Embassy to do something about that, to participate; we weren't quite sure to what level. And it also happened that at the same time there was going to be the International Exhibition in Seville.

Q: Where we would have an official pavilion.

LINDER: Representation, and a pavilion. So, both of the events were pending from the moment that I arrived. In Barcelona, just before I arrived a bomb had been placed in the consulate, which was in an office building, and it had injured a couple of people, our local employees, and destroyed part of the office there. So, we knew we had to get out of there, we wanted a more secure building, and that became tied in to the events for 1992; I mean, if we were going to move out, we needed a place that was up and running by 1992. So we were looking for property right from the beginning of my tour there in Barcelona. That got me down to Barcelona with a fair amount of frequency. It was difficult to find property in Barcelona. I was told that like Tokyo it's one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

Q: And therefore, quite expensive real estate.

LINDER: It's expensive, and there's just not much available. We didn't want to be in another office building after our experience there, we wanted a free-standing building. Anyway, we finally found an old villa, and it was out of the central part of town, which was some concern, but the consular function in Barcelona was less important than it was, we weren't issuing visas there anymore. So, the fact that somebody might have to get on a bus or take a taxi to reach the consulate that's on the edge of town rather than in the center of the town no longer played as a big issue.

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We bought that house or villa; it was owned by the Red Cross at the time, they were using it as an office building, and it had some historical significance within Barcelona. So it was a very complicated negotiation, and the Red Cross were tough negotiators. I think we paid nine or 10 million for the property, and then we had to refurbish it and put in all the security, and anticipate what special needs might be required during the Olympics. So I spent a lot of time with all of that, and we got people from FBO out there working on the refurbishment, and we finally made a special arrangement with A Navy CB Battalion to come in and help complete the project.

Anyway, we finally succeeded in getting it set up in time for the Olympics, including a very special security facility to house and monitor security at the Olympics, and to be able to react in whatever way might be necessary, whatever assistance we might be called on to provide we could provide. So we put a lot of electronic gear and special equipment and special rooms into that consulate to set up this operation which was run by State and CIA and the US military in coordination with the Olympic Committee and everybody else. Anyway, we got it in, and that was okay, and fortunately, there was no incident down there.

In other terms of the Olympics, the Ambassador visited. We had a new Ambassador by then, his name was Capen; he'd come out just before the Olympics. All the arrangements had been done with the previous Ambassador, but he decided that he wanted to leave before the Olympics, before the new US election, presidential campaign, and so we got Capen, and he was very interested in presenting himself, and being present, and being seen around, and took on a staff aide. We had to get tickets for him for every event, and his family and relatives. He was very visible as a visitor during the Olympics. But otherwise, we were not overly involved. In preparation, we had gotten information from Seoul, where the previous Olympics had been held, and learned what the Embassy did in Seoul, and we went over all this. The Ambassador's instructions to me were, in planning for the Olympics, pull out all the stops, we're going to do it right, get all the resources you need, and that's the way we started out. But it was gradually whittled away by the

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Department, and in a correct manner—how many people, how would we implement the staff in Barcelona, how big of a consular role could we expect, just what would we be expected to do in the way of providing support for press, and all the US businesses that were down there, and so forth. But it really came down to just supporting the Ambassador, supporting the official USG representatives to the Olympics.

Q: Some of whom had official connection with...

LINDER: Yes. There was a group of representatives appointed by the US Government. So we had to provide some support for them and see that they had hotel space, and all of that, we had the whole Olympic security issue. We set up the facilities for the security group, and our political counselor was down there as a liaison, and the Station Chief was down there, but that operation was out of our hands.

Q: What were some of your other main challenges or accomplishments in four years in Madrid?

LINDER: There was Seville. We had a consulate in Seville, and we had closed that consulate down but kept the building. It was an old building, there was a world exhibition in Seville in 1926, I think it was, sometime in the '20s, and a building had been built for the US pavilion, but in modern terms, a small building. It was a delightful building; it had wonderful tiles from Seville, and it had an interior courtyard, it had old Roman columns that had been picked up here and there and built into the building. It was a magnificent old place, and the Embassy was reluctant to give it up. The consulate closed, but we kept the building open as an office. The building was ours for 75 years, rent-free, and I think the lease would have been up in the year 2002, something like that. So we had that building used as an office by our Consular Agent in Seville, and one FSN who worked in the building. The Consular Agent was an American academic working in Seville. We also had a caretaker and a cleaning lady in the building and people from the Embassy could go

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down there and use the building to stay on a weekend. But it was an awkward situation; and difficult to maintain the building.

Anyway, with the International Exhibition down there, a commissioner was appointed, and this only after a lot of hemming and hawing, but they finally appointed a commissioner. Not the important name who was initially expected, but a person of lesser rank, an able person whose name was Bush. He was a fund-raiser, a very young guy, he lived in Chevy Chase. Anyway, the idea was he'd move into that building, that would be his residence and office. And so we worked up a scheme to make it habitable and representational. It would be not only his house, but the office as well, and of course, he would have to have a staff, and then we were going to build an American Pavilion on the exhibition grounds.

Q: At the fairgrounds.

LINDER: At the fairgrounds, and the commissioner would be responsible for seeing that got built up, and for everything that went on in it. So anyway, we were involved in this, so was the US Information Agency, the whole project moved very slowly. They kept redoing the plans for the pavilion and time was passing by, and finally they got this old geodesic dome that had been used previously; they brought that in, and our showing at the exhibition was not what had been anticipated. But nevertheless, we did put up a pavilion and it was done on time. A lot of imagination was used to provide the funding for refurbishing that consulate building, and it turned into an outstanding residence. Bush, his wife and three kids, lived there for a year, and they had a good time, and he entertained a lot of people. He made good use of that place. The furniture was contributed, people came in and painted murals on the walls, and turned it into a real showplace. It was a lot of fun having Bush there, he did a good job.

Anyway, that all took a lot of time. Afterwards, of course, we were saying, what do we do with the building, and for all I know, that's still going on. There was a big to-do following my departure over that building in Seville, the cost of upkeep and how it could be used.

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There was an administrative issue in Madrid representative of the changing status of diplomatic immunity and an embassy's responsibility for its local employees, and its obligations to the local law. A former employee of the embassy had been fired before I got there. He had been one of the security people, a local employee. The embassy fired him for cause. Even though we paid him \$3,000 and he signed a waiver that he was satisfied he had gotten all that he had coming to him, he had second thoughts about that, and sought recourse through the press. He gave interviews in which he identified the Station Chief and where the Station Chief lived, and then he got on talk radio, he got a lawyer, and kept after us and kept after us and kept after us. The embassy hadn't documented the cause for dismissal properly. There may have been good reasons to have fired the guy, but the incident that precipitated it wasn't one that would stand up in a court of law, a labor court. So we finally had to sit down with the guy and negotiate an agreement, and we ended up paying him a couple hundred thousand dollars, and still, he wasn't satisfied. You look at this incident over time, it wasn't considered a problem back in the beginning, and it was not something we hid from the Foreign Office. We had written the Foreign Office many times, and the Foreign Office had always stood behind the Embassy and said, "You can't do that, the ex-employee's case has no validity, the Embassy is okay." But when push comes to shove, the Foreign Office can't stand by you, because they can't go against their own legal system. It's a change that I've seen in the course of my career in the Foreign Service. Privilege has significantly narrowed and basically no longer applies to meet administrative issues. Q: Well, the role of lawyers and litigation has certainly in America and what we're also saying is it happens elsewhere as well.

LINDER: It happens elsewhere as well. In my last two posts I established strong relationships with law firms, and used them a lot. In Madrid, the Embassy's bank account was frozen.

Q: This is this disgruntled former employee?

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LINDER: Yes, frozen through court order. Fortunately, I had a good relationship with the bank and was able to delay imposition of the freeze so it didn't harm us. But, this is the sort of thing that you didn't have when I first started in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, I think one of the other lessons I've drawn from this conversation, reconfirming, I guess, what I knew, and certainly believed, is that an Administrative Counselor, an Administrative Officer, the liaison relationships that he or she has with the police, with the medical community, with lawyers, certainly with...

LINDER: Fire departments...

Q: ...fire departments, the host government, are all extremely important. It's not just a matter of internal housekeeping and the other people in the embassy take care of that kind of relationship, but the Administrative Counselor has to have confidence, has to know who to go to, and they have to have confidence in him or her, who they're speaking for.

LINDER: Absolutely. That's the most important function.

Q: Well, Perry, it's getting late. You came back in 1992, you worked in the Board of Examiners for a year, and then you retired from the Foreign Service.

LINDER: That's right. And now I'm working part time for the Office of the Inspector General, so I'm back where I was in 1978.

Q: Fortunately, you still have time to play excellent tennis, and I think we'll stop the conversation here. I've really enjoyed talking with you, Perry.

LINDER: It's been a pleasure.

End of interview